

POEMS OF

LORD BYRON

SELECTED AND ARRANGED IN CHRONO-
LOGICAL ORDER WITH A PREFACE
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LITT D.

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PREFACE

I

TO make a selection from Byron's poems which should reflect their mingled splendour and turbid force, and yet contain nothing that might not stand securely on its own merits, has been found a difficult task by critics, themselves poets, of greater authority than the present editor. Swinburne undertook the task in 1866, introducing his selection with a preface as just in its criticism of the man and the poet as in passages of eulogy it was magnificent in phrase and rhythm. Matthew Arnold made a like attempt, at the suggestion, Mr. Gosse tells us, of Lord Beaconsfield, fifteen years later, and by his introduction in which he claimed for Wordsworth and Byron a place of supremacy among the poets of the nineteenth century kindled in Swinburne's mind a flame of anger which burned furiously in all that he had to say of Byron thereafter.

The present writer has endeavoured elsewhere to indicate the divergence in point of view which explains, at least in part, the estimates of the two poets; the stress laid by the elder on "a sound subject-matter," the instinct of the younger for the spirit and the form, above all the music of poetry, himself a master in a school of the most conscious and curious artificers who have ever been great English poets.

The selections they made were characteristic. Swinburne recognised and emphasised the peculiar difficulty of choosing from poetry so great and yet so imperfect. "Byron, who rarely wrote anything either worthless or faultless, can only be judged and appreciated in the mass; the greatest of his works was his whole work taken

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pageants of *Childe Harold*; the billowy, sparkling, foaming roll of the stanzas, the story, the comment, and the changing moods of *Don Juan*. Byron's best poetry is like his talk: "a stream, sometimes smooth, sometimes rapid, and sometimes rushing down in cataracts."

"I looked on him,
But the gay smile had faded in his eye.
'And such,' he cried, 'is our mortality,
And this must be the emblem and the sign
Of what should be eternal and divine!—
And like that black and dreary bell, the soul,
Hung in a heaven-illumined tower, must toll
Our thoughts and our desires to meet below
Round the rent heart and pray, as madmen do,
For what? They know not,—till the night of death
As sunset that strange vision, severeth
Our memory from itself, and us from all
We sought and yet were baffled' I recall
The sense of what he said, although I mar
The force of his expressions "

So Shelley; and Landor writes to the same effect. "He possesses the soul of poetry, which is energy; but he wants that ideal beauty which is the sublimer emanation, I will not say of the real, for this is the more real of the two, but of that which is ordinarily subject to the senses." Yes, Byron lacked the power to communicate to what he described the final transfiguration of spirit which is the work of the greatest poetry, its full felicity of language and harmony, but he has revealed, in poetry of tremendous actuality and power, what life is unillumined by the poetry of the soul which is faith and vision.

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The purpose of an anthology, then, must be to preserve this impression of vitality and power, of shifting moods each vivid and intense; and this can only be done by whole poems of some length and by extracts from the longer poems of sufficient compass to do justice to this vitality and versatility, the register of this arresting voice. The aim of this volume is to try to carry a little farther the method adopted by Swinburne. The staple of the present selection is formed by the two last cantos of *Childe Harold* (my method of dealing with which will be explained), *Beppo*, *Cain*, *The Vision of Judgment*, and three consecutive cantos of *Don Juan* complete. Round these I have grouped, keeping the chronological order throughout, such meditative pieces as *Darkness* and *Prometheus*, with a carefully made selection from the shorter and longer lyrics, including a few from the dramas.

With *Childe Harold* I have dealt somewhat boldly. The choice given me by the size of the volume was either selection, from which I and my publishers were averse, or a single canto. But the last two cantos of *Childe Harold* are a single and unique poem. They have the slightest connection with the previous cantos. In those, taking Beattie and the eighteenth-century Spenserians as his model, and intending to use the stanza as a vehicle for varying moods, grave and gay, he had written a pleasant, romantic and spirited, sketch of travel in lands made interesting by recent history or classical associations. The freshness, the colour, the touch of romantic melancholy appealed to the taste of the day, and the poem found many imitators. But the third canto strikes a new note. Byron and Europe had passed through a tremendous crisis between 1812 and 1816; and if one mark of a classical poem is

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that in it we hear the voice, not of an individual alone, but of a generation, Byron's *Childe Harold* III. and IV might be styled the classical poem of Europe in the years immediately following 1815, when the long period of high hopes and fierce conflicts which the French Revolution inaugurated closed in shattering and complete disillusionment. Great men, great events, great cities, all tell the same tale, *vanitas vanitatum*. Only nature, only beauty endure. The Rhine, the Alps, Lake Thrasimene, and the Sea all speak of the transitoriness of human achievements, of a beauty and grandeur which outlives all the drums, and trappings of human conquests and empires; and yet human history too has its abiding values, not wars and conquests and empires, but heroism and love and art.

Now Byron's treatment of this great theme for oratorical, sonorous declamation is irregular in development and unequal. There is no real connecting thread, and at times we relapse towards the poetical guide-book of the earlier cantos. He might have printed the whole, as Tennyson did *In Memoriam*, in sections, or divided the different passages of description and declamation by asterisks as in *The Giaour*. For the transitions are quite abrupt, and stanzas were frequently inserted in batches after the canto had been completed. It occurred to me that I might, on the one hand, preserve the sense of movement which Arnold's selection of short purple passages annuls, and on the other hand retain the great things of both cantos—Waterloo and the Alps, Venice, Rome, the Sea; that I might even diminish the impression of too abrupt transition by separating the sections, while under the shadow of this separation eliminating some of the weaker passages. The impression I have tried to

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convey is one implicit in Byron's own arrangement, of a symphony, — the comparison is a loose one, — a series of movements, passionate or more plaintive, separated by pauses, some silent bars, before the instruments break in again. I have tried, without reprinting the whole, to retain the movement of a mind swept hither and thither by the fluctuation of passionate moods.

“For I am as a weed
Flung from the rock, on Ocean's foam to sail
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath
prevail.”

The third canto opens magnificently and sustains itself without effort till the close of the stanzas on Waterloo. Those which follow, on Napoleon, are weaker and less musical, never adequate to their theme. Napoleon fascinated Byron as he did Hazlitt. He subscribed to the judgment that “Napoleon has made past fame dubious and future fame impossible,” but he never succeeded in saying anything so final and illuminating on the subject as Shelley's great lyric:

“What! alive and so bold, O Earth?
Art thou not overbold?”

The strain begins to rise again, and the stanzas on the Rhine are not without charm, though a little in the sentimental vein of the first cantos; but it is with the Alps and Byron's first attempt at the Wordsworthian blend of nature and personal feeling that the passionate interchange of moods recommences in verses that roll and crash or breathe the intense atmosphere of voluptuous feeling. I have kept all of these, omitting only those on Rousseau, which contain some noble verses, because their

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theme is less actual to-day and the workmanship unequal, and a few weak connecting verses after the perfect stanza on *Gibbon*. I may deceive myself, but I think the poem even gains from these pauses and omissions; nor will a reader, I think, much regret the omission of some of the "rhymed guide-book" stanzas in the fourth canto, the concentration on Venice, the great Florentines, *Cannæ*, and then Rome and the Sea. Rome, like the Alps, evokes all the blended and conflicting moods of the poet, the passionate intermingling of historical and personal reflection, as in the former of nature and self; and the Sea closes both strains.

II

In the three little songs which immediately follow *Childe Harold*, and in *Beppo* itself, we hear Byron tuning his instrument for a very different mood and movement. These form the overture to *Don Juan*. But *Beppo* itself is not to be lightly dismissed. I have said elsewhere that it is our best, almost our only comic story in verse since Chaucer wrote the tales of the Reeve and the Miller, the Friar and the Summoner. This is high praise, artistically, and Byron's slight, slight story, involved in endless digressions, may seem hardly to deserve it, yet Chaucer could not have bettered (it is quite in his own vein—compare the dialogues in the Merchant's tale) the closing stanzas and Laura's welcome to her long-lost husband.

Don Juan needs different treatment from *Childe Harold*. Here the omission of connecting passages inevitably destroys one of the chief qualities of the poem, the rapid shifting of the moods. I have preferred to give three

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cantos complete, and those the three which are most rich of incident and mood. Here is the shipwreck and the whole episode of Juan and Haidée, Byron's finest love-story. Swinburne gives the first of these, the beautiful scene on the beach, an excerpt from the final banquet closing with *The Isles of Greece*, and then the *Ave Maria* stanzas. But the peculiar quality of Byron's work is obscured if one omits the links, the medley that follows *The Isles of Greece* and leads up to the *Ave Maria*,—poetic fame; Milton and Mrs. Milton; Shakespeare and deer-stealing; Lord Bacon and bribery; Southey and Coleridge and Pantisocracy and the two milliners of Bath; Wordsworth and his "drowsy, frowzy poem, the *Excursion*"—and then in a moment:

"Ave Maria! blessed be the hour!"

To omit these stanzas is not quite the same thing as to drop weak verses where the poet fails to do what elsewhere he does well. It is to omit something different and kind, equally well done, whose connection with the more serious passages is essential to the main impression which it is the aim and end of the poem to produce, a sense of the irrelevance, the medley, the meaningless blend of the trifling, the moving, and the cruel, which life is when seen by an eye that has no faith articulate or inarticulate in a hidden purpose, a life behind this life.

These cantos belong, indeed, to the early part of the poem and do not reveal clearly what was to become later the principal motive of the poem—a satire on human life and aristocratic and kingly government. There is satire in these first cantos. We know whom Byron has in view when he chatters of Donna Inez and Mathematics, but

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in the main the poem is a picture of a young man's life, conceived in the spirit of Fielding's *Tom Jones*, equally sympathetic and ready to condone, with a more violent juxtaposition of moods—comedy, romance, grim tragedy. The juxtaposition of moods in the shipwreck scenes is violent enough to revolt, but Byron's answer would have been. "Such is life; it is not I who describe it, but life that is so; that does thus blend horror and beauty, callousness and loving-kindness, which you should arraign; I have drawn both with equal sincerity." This latent motive becomes clearer in the cantos which follow, when the poem becomes more and more a satire on human nature and the classes that govern Europe, intent on war and diplomacy and, for their chief relaxation, love as the world understands love:

"Ecclesiastes said that all is vanity,

Most modern preachers say the same, or show it
By their examples of true Christianity:

† In short, all know, or very soon may know it;
And in this scene of all-confess'd inanity,

By Saint, by Sage, by Preacher, and by Poët,
Must I restrain me, through the fear of strife,
From holding up the nothingness of life?

"Dogs or men—for I flatter you in saying

That you are dogs—your betters far—ye may
Read or read not, what I am now essaying

To show you what you are in every way.
As little as the moon stops for the baying

Of wolves will the bright Muse withdraw one ray
From out her skies—then howl your idle wrath,
While she still silvers o'er your gloomy path."

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The wide sweep of Byron's satire is not yet evident in these early cantos; but none are fuller of the gaiety, buoyancy, vivid description, romance and feeling, wit, that go to make up this incomparable medley—a satire in the original sense of the word. The spirit of the whole is the spirit of disillusionment, the disillusionment of one who looks straight at things as they are in that world which alone Byron knows:

“*Amer savoir, celui qu'on tire du voyage !
Le monde, monotone et petit, aujourd'hui,
Hier, demain, toujours, nous fait voir notre image
Une oasis d'horreur dans un désert d'ennui !*”

The great romantic movement that found so many different voices used Byron to proclaim the imperative craving of passion, “the fierce necessity to feel,” a blind passion that found for itself no clear and perfect expression, and yet made the human heart vibrate with a new, strange vehemence; but used him also to arraign the world of fashion and politics and war in which there was no vision. *Don Juan* is that world portrayed with vivid actuality in a style that is the very echo of a living, speaking voice. All that Byron's poem wants is what no writer content to be a satirist and jester only could give it, a deeper pity for the human heart that suffers and is defeated in this strange, meaningless pageant. The last cantos of the poem have in them a touch, that Thackeray's picture of Vanity Fair lacks, the touch which could only be given by a satirist of aristocratic society who is himself of that society. We find it again in the works of the great aristocrat Count Tolstoi; but the difference between *Don Juan* and *Anna Karenina* is the difference between the picture drawn by

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a satirist, a satirist wanting neither in seriousness nor heart, but seeking in gay mockery an escape from outraged sensibilities and, perhaps, morbid egotism, and one moved by a great passion for humanity in all its weakness and a profound sense of man's need of God.

III

Byron's dramas present a third problem for the student and chooser of what still endures of his work. He felt acutely their failure to interest his readers, for he gave to them much time which might perhaps have been better spent on *Don Juan*. They have little or no real dramatic character, conflict of soul portrayed in word and deed. They are poems in declamation and dialogue; but Byron's blank verse, though it can be dignified and impressive, is terribly wanting in the deep inner music which is the accompaniment of that deeper vision in which Byron is also deficient, that element in poetry which flows from the depths of the subconscious where wit and logic are only intruders. Yet three at least of Byron's dramas deserve careful study—*Manfred*, *Sardanapalus*, and *Cain*, and the greatest of these is surely *Cain*. Historically *Cain* was an event, a challenge to the dominant religious thought of the English, that Evangelicalism which had requickened religious feeling and was purifying, if also narrowing, morality, the influence which had made Miss Milbanke, if not a Calvinist, a very serious young person.

Against that spirit, whose power he never ceased to feel, Byron launches in *Cain*, as he had in *Prometheus*, his unyielding protest. The poem is full of what Goethe called Byron's "perpetual negation . . . The great point is not to pull down but to build up, and in this humanity finds

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pure joy." Of edification of any sort Byron was incapable, and of joy as something quite other than gaiety, that flows from a deeper and purer source, his tormented spirit never tasted. Shelley's high hopes and confidence in human nature he could not share :

" 'We might be otherwise,' "

cries Julian, in *Julian and Maddalo*, who is Shelley—

" 'we might be all

We dream of, happy, high, majestic.

Where is the love, beauty, and truth we seek

But in our mind? and if we were not weak

Should we be less in deed than in desire?'

'Aye, if we were not weak—and we aspire

How vainly to be strong!'

'You talk Utopia.'

Yet there is a solidity in Byron's poem, despite its negations, which Shelley's more musical, but visionary, not to say vague, prophetic poetry wants, a terrible sincerity and a splendid courage. In daily intercourse, in his letters, even in what he says by way of defence of *Cain* and *Don Juan*, there was an element of insincerity and inconstancy. But in his later and best poetry, his *daimon*, his genius, speaks the truth that is in him, records what he sees and feels, however limited that vision, however distorted you may account that feeling. '*Don Juan* is a truthful and brilliant picture of life, secular, sensual, aristocratic; *Cain* a sincere and penetrating picture of Byron's troubled mind, and of the orthodox reading of human history and destiny as that had been presented to Byron's imagination. Of the courage needed to challenge English society and English orthodoxy and pietism it is not easy

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to judge fairly now when satire of everything is as easy as it is ineffective, and it is the man who is orthodox, morally or religiously, that needs courage. To appreciate Byron's work one must make some study of the protests which it evoked. In his letters Byron allows himself evasions and makes hardly sincere protests; but in the poems themselves he hits straight from the shoulder. He arraigns the whole scheme of things in the spirit of Thomas Hardy or Mr. A. E. Housman, if he has neither the dramatic insight, tender and humorous, of the one, nor the finished, classical art of the latter.

In beauty of poetry, of phrase and imagery and music; in ethereal delicacy of spirit, *Prometheus Unbound* is doubtless superior to *Cain*—to *Cain* which, whether one thinks of the burthen of the poem or its bare, bald, occasionally banal style, the limited harmony of the blank verse, stands up like a Mount Sinai, bare stone and sand and fire, on whose slopes the scenes with Adah and her child are a precarious oasis of verdure and tears. But there is more of dramatic truth and variety in Byron's poem than in Shelley's. Prometheus and Asia and Demogorgon are only voices, Shelley's own voice musical, unearthly; Cain is a human being—Byron himself drawn not melodramatically, as in the early poems, but with a mournful understanding—a dark soul, the victim of passions which prompt to “deeds eternity cannot annul,” a dark soul whose sceptical understanding rejects the simple solutions of orthodoxy, of gentler souls like Adam and Abel. And Lucifer is Byron too, the critical intellect which had haunted the child in Aberdeen with troublesome questions. Adah is one ideal of woman as Byron understood women. He had but two. One is the woman who is a child with no scruples or inhibi-

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bitions to check her natural impulse to love and to be loved, Haidée in *Don Juan*, Neuha in *The Island*.

“She flew to her young mate like a young bird.”

The other is the woman whom experience has taught only infinite patience and tenderness and forgiveness

“A dreary, and an early doom, my brother,
Has been thy lot! Of all who mourn for thee,
I alone must not weep. My office is
Henceforth to dry up tears, and not to shed them;
But yet of all who mourn, none mourn like me,
Not only for thyself, but him who slew thee.
Now, Cain, I will divide thy burden with thee ”

Of *The Vision of Judgment*, which was published anonymously in the same year as *Cam*, it is needless to say much. No anthology of Byron's work could omit his most brilliant personal satire. The history of Byron's quarrel with Southey may be read in Lord Ernle's edition of Byron's letters and the late Mr. Coleridge's of the poems. In that quarrel Byron was largely in the wrong, and to justify Byron it is not necessary to be unjust to Southey. He was a good man in a sense in which Byron certainly was not, strong in all those virtues in which Byron was wanting. But he was a narrow, limited man, extraordinarily complaisant, and a passionate politician. Professor Dowden claimed for Southey that he was never dazzled by Napoleon, like Byron and Hazlitt, but he owed the exemption rather to his limitations than to any power of transcending the impression of power which Napoleon communicated to every one of imagination or insight.

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Byron did in part transcend that impression, and Shelley did so altogether in the lyric which says everything essential on Napoleon's career

“‘Ay, alive and still bold,’ muttered Earth,
‘Napoleon’s fierce spirit rolled
In terror and blood and gold,
A torrent of ruin from death to his birth
Leave the millions who follow to mould
The metal before it be cold;
And weave into his shame, which like the dead
Shrouds me, the hopes that from his glory fled ’”

And as with Napoleon so with Byron, Southey could only see the evil, could not hear the voice of the *daimon* which in Byron's poetry spoke the truth through all that shocked him. Shelley could; though Byron's pride and perversity grated on him sorely: “Space wondered less at the swift and fair creations of God, when he grew weary of vacancy, than I at this spirit of an angel in the mortal paradise of a decaying body.” *Don Juan* was to Southey merely a “flagitious production,” “a lascivious book,” yet he could rush to the defence of George IV.—in the precious divorce case—and accept with pride the Poet Laureateship, though the Prince Regent had been the very incarnation of that society, sensual and cynical, which Byron's poem holds up to ridicule and detestation. But the moral issue between Byron and Southey has been so well stated by Mr. Arthur Symonds that I am fain to borrow his words: “And so I find in Southey, high-minded, generous, and helpful as he could be, a disloyalty more serious than any personal disloyalty, such as Coleridge's—a disloyalty to genius, an immorality more hurtful than Byron's, the im-

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morality of the intellect, which shuts its eyes to truth when truth comes to it under some disguise of evil."

And as a satirical poem *The Vision of Judgment* seems to me unrivalled—except it be by *Holy Willie's Prayer*, and that is a slighter production—greater than Dryden's or Pope's, not in this or that individual feature—power of portraiture, weight of stroke, pointed epigram—but in variety of mood, invention, and the gaiety of spirit which lifts the poet above his victims as completely as Dryden's scornful magnanimity.

IV

To select the best of Byron's lyrics is not a very difficult task, nor is the result a large one. He had the temper, the vehemence, the speed, the momentum of the orator rather than the wings of the pure lyric poet like Shelley. But to some of his songs he has communicated both fire and momentum. His earliest verses are no better than the majority of later eighteenth-century lyrics, poems which, as Brunetière says of J. B. Rousseau's odes, have the form but not the spirit of lyrical poetry. I have begun with Byron's rendering of a modern Greek song, not more than elegant perhaps, but showing well what the momentum and rush of his vehement spirit could do for the anapæsts of Cowper and others. Here we have the first example of the rhythm which was to be the rhythm of Swinburne's *Dolores*. In the elegy which follows he drops a spark of intenser feeling into the shorter ode of Gray or Akenside. The first two verses from the *Corsair* song are better than those which follow, and illustrate well the splendid vehemence which Byron can communicate, which makes "She walks in beauty like the night"

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and "There be none of Beauty's daughters" unique lyrics of their kind, if it is not quite the best kind of love-lyric, where oratory never seems in place.

The Hebrew Melodies owe their inspiration less to Mr. Nathan and his music, one suspects, than to Miss Milbanke and her pious predilections; and not many of them are memorable. But "Oh! snatched away" is a good example of the late eighteenth-century lyric

"And oft by yon blue gushing stream
Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,"

and no superior criticism of a poem that has become popular should deprive a wise reader of his pleasure in the stanzas which tell how

"The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold," whose anapæsts have the rush and trample of a cavalry charge. I do not think that "When coldness wraps this suffering clay" has often been included in a selection before. It savours a little of the rhetorical hymn of the period, yet it seems to me to soar as a poem could hardly do were it merely a rhetorical effort, if it were not inspired by a conviction and aspiration which—as we know from other sources—Byron was never willing to resign.

Of the letters to his sister the best seems to me to be the second, which was suppressed at the time and first published in Moore's *Life and Letters*. The anapæsts of the first intensify the note of defiance which suggests that he is thinking less of his sister than of another :

"Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me ;
Though parted, it was not to fly ;
Though watchful, 'twas not to defame me ;
Nor mute, that the world might belie."

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The second is purer and sweeter in feeling, and it is interesting to see the *ottava rima* used with an altogether different movement and different effect from what Byron gave to it, later in *Beppo* and *Don Juan*.

It is not to Byron, indeed, one would look for new and wonderful metrical effects such as those with which Shelley was to enrich English lyrical measures. Yet he has some surprises for the reader, some rhythms that once heard are remembered. "I enter thy garden" is one, and another is

"When we two parted
In silence and tears,"

whatever one is to call it, anapæstic dimeter with Professor Saintsbury, or, as I should prefer, taking each pair of lines as one, logæædic verse, *i.e.* dactyls and trochees interspersed, with dactyls predominating and frequent anacrusis.

"When wē twō | pārtēd in | silēnce ānd | tēars,
Hālf brōkēn | hēārtēd tō | sēvēr fōr | yēars,
Pāle grēw thȳ | chēek ānd cōld, | cōldēr thȳ | kīss,
Trulȳ thāt | hōūr fōretōld | sōrrōw tō | thīs."

It is worth while to compare it with the subtler blending of dactyls and trochees with anacrusis and catalectic lines in Shelley's

"Swiftly walk over the western wave,
Spirit of Night!"

There are not many of the lyrical passages of the dramas which deserve to be remembered. Some of them are unspeakably lumbering or creaky, but

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“Beautiful shadow
Of Thetis’s boy”

and

“The wars are over”

are for Byron surprisingly light-winged and musical.

V

But no critic will claim that Byron’s poetry lives because of its felicities and subtleties of diction and metre. It lives because of the strong breath of life and actuality that blows through it. Professor Elton, a just and appreciative critic of Byron, tells me that “to the living poets, elder and younger, Byron appears to be very much of a shadow, and nothing that professors say is likely to move them.” That may well be. The young poets of a generation read chiefly each other and themselves. None the less, the best of Byron will hold its own in the fluctuations of fashion with those who love poetry in all its varieties and are not the slaves of fashion. “You have so many divine poems,” Byron wrote to Murray of *Don Juan*, “is it nothing to have written a human one?” We have so many divine poets, so many poets who live in the world of dreams and ideals—Spenser, Milton, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats—that we can enjoy also a human poet, a Burns, a Byron, a Browning, a Kipling; and of all these Byron is pre-eminently the man of the world, able, like that other great aristocrat Tolstoi, to describe and satirise aristocratic life from inside, not looking in through the doors like Thackeray. And we have so many literary poets, exquisite craftsmen, curious artificers in phrase and rhythm, that we are glad to turn at times to a poet who writes a

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language "such as men do use." Byron's style realises Wordsworth's ideal better than his own. Tennyson and his age had done with Byron; but in an age that is eager to make poetry breathe of life rather than of art Byron may find a hearing again. But perhaps I may be allowed to quote what I have said elsewhere.

"Close your Byron; open your Goethe, says Carlyle; but for Goethe most English readers were disposed to substitute Wordsworth. 'Close your Byron, open your Keats and Tennyson and Rossetti and Swinburne,' says, or might say, Professor Saintsbury, 'for here is art, "the faultless and fervent melodies" of pure poetry, not the resonant improvisations and vulgar discords of Byron's rhetoric.' Yet the serene wisdom and golden beauty of Goethe, the ministering medicine of Wordsworth's hills and streams and leech-gatherers, the melody and colour of Keats and Tennyson, the exotic passion and music of Rossetti and Swinburne, sometimes pall, and it is with a powerful requickening of our blood that we hear again the rolling guns and clattering squadrons of the stanzas on Waterloo, the storm and passion of the night by Lake Leman. The old thrill comes back when we read again of 'the Niobe of nations,'

'Childless and crownless in her voiceless woe,'

her tombs and ruined Forum, the empty moonlit Coliseum; or hear the old moral, in accents of reverberating intensity, of the vanity of human life, the intoxicating sweetness of love, the sublimity and indifference of nature. Goethe and Wordsworth speak of wisdom and love, of duty and resignation:

'Entbehren sollst du, sollst entbehren',

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but folly and rebellion and hatred appeal to our complex nature also, and we can at times turn with relief from the *Leech-gatherer* or the second part of *Faust* to enjoy the scorn and mockery, the buoyant humour and splendid satire of *Beppo* and *The Vision of Judgment* and *Don Juan*. It is, at least, not without significance that while Arnold and Swinburne were debating and mid-Victorian criticism was passing final sentence on Byron, a young poet was just about to repeat in a measure the experience for his readers and for himself of the Byron of *Childe Harold* and the tales and some of the earlier lyrics. Mr. Kipling has been, I sometimes think, 'le Byron de nos jours,' not in the sense of Browning's poem, but in virtue of the quickening and immediate effect of his poetry on an audience as wide at least as the English-speaking world, an audience not confined to the usual readers of poetry; and because Mr. Kipling, too, found the best material for romance and song, not in the reconstructed world of Greece or the Middle Ages, but in the actualities of life in his own day in India and England, the army, the workshop, and the tramp-steamer."

VI

Of poems that had to be omitted on a choice which was necessarily limited by space, poems like *The Dream*, to which I have preferred *Darkness*, *The Prophecy of Dante*—noble in thought but too wanting in music—I think I regret most *The Island*, the last and the best of Byron's serious tales in verse. In it again, as in the episode of Haidée in *Don Juan*, Byron indulges the thought of a simpler civilisation, where heart and senses are freer, and the rhyming decasyllabics move more easily and harmoniously than in

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earlier attempts. The closing lines come nearer to the expression of a mood of happiness than anything else in all Byron's work:

“All was Ocean, all was Joy!
Down plunged she through the cave to rouse her boy;
Told all she had seen, and all she had hoped, and all
That happy love could augur or recall;
Sprang forth again, with Torquil following free
His bounding Nereid over the broad sea,
Swam round the rock to where a shallow cleft
Hid the canoe that Neuha there had left
Drifting along the tide, without an oar,
That eve the strangers chased them from the shore;
But when these vanished, she pursued her prow,
Regained, and urged to where they found it now:
Nor ever did more love and joy embark,
Than now were wafted in that slender ark.”

Through the kindness of Mr Murray, a name ever associated with Byron, I have been allowed to use the text of the late Mr. Coleridge's final edition. I have, however, compared it throughout with the first editions, and in a few cases restored the older typography—where capitals or italics had been used,—punctuation, and, in one or two cases, the text. I have allowed myself one emendation, in *The Vision of Judgment*, stanza ci., where I have placed a full stop after the sixth line. The “Like King Alfonso” refers, as Byron's own note shows, to what follows: “King Alfonso, speaking of the Ptolemæan system, said that ‘had he been consulted at the creation of the world, he would have spared the Maker some absurdities.’”

To check some of the points in which the late Mr.

PREFACE

Coleridge's text differs from the traditional readings we ventured to ask Mr. Murray to consult the MSS, which he was so kind as to do so far as these were in his hands. But I am unable to discover or ascertain the ground of Mr. Coleridge's reading in *Cain*, Act II. Scene I l. 30

“With an inferior circlet purpler still,”

where the usual reading is

“With an inferior circlet near it still.”

The “blue circle” of l. 29 suggests that “purpler” *may* be right and taken by Coleridge from the MS

I am indebted to my publishers for the free hand which they have given me in carrying out a task they had planned, and for the trouble they have taken to make such changes as I desired to introduce from time to time.

H. J. C. GRIERSON.

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TRANSLATION OF THE ROMAIC SONG,

Μπένω μεσ' τὸ περιβόλι,
Ὁραιοτάτη Χαηδή, κτλ.

I

I ENTER thy garden of roses,
Belovéd and fair Haidée,
Each morning where Flora reposes,
For surely I see her in thee.
Oh, Lovely! thus low I implore thee,
Receive this fond truth from my tongue,
Which utters its song to adore thee,
Yet trembles for what it has sung;
As the branch, at the bidding of Nature,
Adds fragrance and fruit to the tree,
Through her eyes, through her every feature,
Shines the soul of the young Haidée

2

But the loveliest garden grows hateful
When Love has abandoned the bowers;
Bring me hemlock—since mine is ungrateful,
That herb is more fragrant than flowers.
The poison, when poured from the chalice,
Will deeply embitter the bowl,
But when drunk to escape from thy malice,
The draught shall be sweet to my soul
Too cruel! in vain I implore thee
My heart from these horrors to save!
Will nought to my bosom restore thee?
Then open the gates of the grave.

TRANSLATION OF A ROMAIC SONG

3

As the chief who to combat advances
Secure of his conquest before,
Thus thou, with those eyes for thy lances,
Hast pierced through my heart to its core:
Ah, tell me, my soul! must I perish
By pangs which a smile would dispel?
Would the hope, which thou once bad'st me cherish,
For torture repay me too well?
Now sad is the garden of roses,
Belovéd but false Hardée!
There Flora all withered reposes,
And mourns o'er thine absence with me

1811

AND THOU ART DEAD, AS YOUNG AND FAIR

Heu, quanto minus est cum reliquis versari quam
tui meminisse!

I

AND thou art dead, as young and fair
As aught of mortal birth,
And form so soft, and charms so rare,
Too soon returned to Earth!
Though Earth received them in her bed,
And o'er the spot the crowd may tread
In carelessness or mirth,
There is an eye which could not brook
A moment on that grave to look.

2

I will not ask where thou liest low,
Nor gaze upon the spot;
There flowers or weeds at will may grow,
So I behold them not
It is enough for me to prove
That what I loved, and long must love,
Like common earth can rot;
To me there needs no stone to tell,
'Tis Nothing that I loved so well.

3

Yet did I love thee to the last
As fervently as thou,
Who didst not change through all the past,
And canst not alter now.

AND THOU ART DEAD, AS YOUNG AND FAIR

The love where Death has set his seal,
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
Nor falsehood disavow:
And, what were worse, thou canst not see
Or wrong, or change, or fault in me

4

The better days of life were ours,
The worst can be but mine
The sun that cheers, the storm that lowers,
Shall never more be thine.
The silence of that dreamless sleep
I envy now too much to weep;
Nor need I to repine,
That all those charms have passed away
I might have watched through long decay

5

The flower in ripened bloom unmatched
Must fall the earliest prey,
Though by no hand untimely snatched,
The leaves must drop away
And yet it were a greater grief
To watch it withering, leaf by leaf,
Than see it plucked to-day;
Since earthly eye but ill can bear
To trace the change to foul from fair.

6

I know not if I could have borne
To see thy beauties fade;
The night that followed such a morn
Had worn a deeper shade.

AND THOU ART DEAD, AS YOUNG AND FAIR

Thy day without a cloud hath passed,
And thou wert lovely to the last,
 Extinguished, not decayed;
As stars that shoot along the sky
Shine brightest as they fall from high.

7

As once I wept, if I could weep,
 My tears might well be shed,
To think I was not near to keep
 One vigil o'er thy bed;
To gaze, how fondly! on thy face,
To fold thee in a faint embrace,
 Uphold thy drooping head,
And show that love, however vain,
Nor thou nor I can feel again.

8

Yet how much less it were to gain,
 Though thou hast left me free,
The loveliest things that still remain,
 Than thus remember thee!
The all of thine that cannot die
Through dark and dread Eternity
 Returns again to me,
And more thy buried love endears
Than aught, except its living years.

February 1842.

SONG FROM "THE CORSAIR"

I

DEEP in my soul that tender secret dwells,
Lonely and lost to light for evermore,
Save when to thine my heart responsive swells,
Then trembles into silence as before.

2

There, in its centre, a sepulchral lamp
Burns the slow flame, eternal—but unseen,
Which not the darkness of Despair can damp,
Though vain its ray as it had never been.

3

Remember me—Oh! pass not thou my grave
Without one thought whose relics there recline.
The only pang my bosom dare not brave
Must be to find forgetfulness in thine

4

My fondest—faintest—latest accents hear—
Grief for the dead not Virtue can reprove,
Then give me all I ever asked—a tear,
The first—last—sole reward of so much love!

1813

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

I

SHE walks in Beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies,
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which Heaven to gaudy day denies

2

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

3

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

June 12, 1814.

OH! SNATCHED AWAY IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM

I

O H! snatched away in Beauty's bloom,
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb,
But on thy turf shall roses rear
Their leaves, the earliest of the year,
And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom

2

And oft by yon blue gushing stream
Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
And feed deep thought with many a dream,
And lingering pause and lightly tread,
Fond wretch! as if her step disturbed the dead!

3

Away! we know that tears are vain,
That Death nor heeds nor hears distress
Will this unteach us to complain?
Or make one mourner weep the less?
And thou—who tell'st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

1814—1815.

WHEN COLDNESS WRAPS THIS SUFFERING CLAY

I

WHEN coldness wraps this suffering clay,
Ah! whither strays the immortal mind?
It cannot die, it cannot stay,
But leaves its darkened dust behind
Then, unembodied, doth it trace
By steps each planet's heavenly way?
Or fill at once the realms of space,
A thing of eyes, that all survey?

2

Eternal—boundless,—undecayed,
A thought unseen, but seeing all,
All, all in earth, or skies displayed,
Shall it survey, shall it recall
Each fainter trace that Memory holds
So darkly of departed years,
In one broad glance the Soul beholds,
And all, that was, at once appears

3

Before Creation peopled earth,
Its eye shall roll through chaos back;
And where the farthest heaven had birth,
The Spirit trace its rising track
And where the future mars or makes,
Its glance dilate o'er all to be,
While Sun is quenched—or System breaks,
Fixed in its own Eternity.

WHEN COLDNESS WRAPS THIS SUFFERING CLAY

4

Above or Love—Hope—Hate—or Fear,
 It lives all passionless and pure
An age shall fleet like earthly year;
 Its years as moments shall endure
Away—away—without a wing,
 O'er all—through all—its thought shall fly,
A nameless and eternal thing,
 Forgetting what it was to die.

Seaham, 1815.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

I

THE Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

2

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen,
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown

3

For the angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved—and for ever grew
[still !

4

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf

5

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail
And the tents were all silent—the banners alone—
The lances unlifted—the trumpet unblown.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB

6

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal,
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

Seaham, February 17, 1815

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

O Lachrymarum fons, tenero sacros
Ducentium ortus ex animo: quater
Felix! in imo qui scatentem
Pectore te, pia Nympha, sensit.
—GRAY'S Poemata

I

THERE'S not a joy the world can give like that it takes
away,
When the glow of early thought declines in Feeling's
dull decay;
'Tis not on Youth's smooth cheek the blush alone, which
fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere Youth itself be
past

2

Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck of
happiness
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt or ocean of excess.
The magnet of their course is gone, or only points in vain
The shore to which their shivered sail shall never stretch
again

3

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like Death itself
comes down;
It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not dream its own,
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain of our tears,
And though the eye may sparkle still, 'tis where the ice
appears

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

4

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and mirth distract
the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no more their former
hope of rest,
'Tis but as ivy-leaves around the ruined turret wreath,
All green and wildly fresh without, but worn and grey
beneath

5

Oh, could I feel as I have felt, —or be what I have been,
Or weep as I could once have wept, o'er many a vanished
scene,
As springs, in deserts found, seem sweet, all brackish
though they be,
So, midst the withered waste of life, those tears would flow
to me

March 1815

WHEN WE TWO PARTED

I

WHEN we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss,
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

2

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow—
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame:
I hear thy name spoken,
And share in its shame.

3

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me—
Why wert thou so dear?
They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well:—
Long, long shall I rue thee,
Too deeply to tell

WHEN WE TWO PARTED

4

In secret we met—

In silence I grieve,
That thy heart could forget,

Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee

After long years,
How should I greet thee?—

With silence and tears.

1808—1816

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

1

THERE be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like thee;
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me
When, as if its sound were causing
The charmed Ocean's pausing
The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lulled winds seem dreaming:

2

And the midnight Moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep;
Whose breast is gently heaving,
As an infant's asleep
So the spirit bows before thee,
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

March 28, 1816.

SONNET ON CHILLON

ETERNAL Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art:
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind,
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned—
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonivard!—May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

1816

DARKNESS

I HAD a dream, which was not all a dream.
The bright sun was extinguished, and the stars
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
Rayless, and pathless, and the icy Earth
Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;
Morn came and went—and came, and brought no day,
And men forgot their passions in the dread
Of this their desolation; and all hearts
Were chilled into a selfish prayer for light.
And they did live by watchfires—and the thrones,
The palaces of crownèd kings—the huts,
The habitations of all things which dwell,
Were burnt for beacons, cities were consumed,
And men were gathered round their blazing homes
To look once more into each other's face;
Happy were those who dwelt within the eye
Of the volcanoes, and their mountain-torch.
A fearful hope was all the World contained,
Forests were set on fire—but hour by hour
They fell and faded—and the crackling trunks
Extinguished with a crash—and all was black.
The brows of men by the despairing light
Wore an unearthly aspect, as by fits
The flashes fell upon them; some lay down
And hid their eyes and wept; and some did rest
Their chins upon their clenched hands, and smiled,
And others hurried to and fro, and fed
Their funeral piles with fuel, and looked up
With mad disquietude on the dull sky,
The pall of a past World; and then again

DARKNESS

With curses cast them down upon the dust,
And gnashed their teeth and howled · the wild birds shrieked,
And, terrified, did flutter on the ground,
And flap their useless wings, the wildest brutes
Came tame and tremulous; and vipers crawled
And twined themselves among the multitude,
Hissing, but stingless—they were slain for food
And War, which for a moment was no more,
Did glut himself again —a meal was bought
With blood, and each sate sullenly apart
Gorging himself in gloom no Love was left,
All earth was but one thought—and that was Death,
Immediate and inglorious; and the pang
Of famine fed upon all entrails—men
Died, and their bones were tombless as their flesh,
The meagre by the meagre were devoured,
Even dogs assailed their masters, all save one,
And he was faithful to a corse, and kept
The birds and beasts and famished men at bay,
Till hunger clung them, or the dropping dead
Lured their lank jaws, himself sought out no food,
But with a piteous and perpetual moan,
And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand
Which answered not with a caress—he died.
The crowd was famished by degrees; but two
Of an enormous city did survive,
And they were enemies they met beside
The dying embers of an altar-place
Where had been heaped a mass of holy things
For an unholy usage; they raked up,
And shivering scraped with their cold skeleton hands
The feeble ashes, and their feeble breath

DARKNESS

Blew for a little life, and made a flame
Which was a mockery, then they lifted up
Their eyes as it grew lighter, and beheld
Each other's aspects—saw, and shrieked, and died—
Even of their mutual hideousness they died,
Unknowing who he was upon whose brow
Famine had written Fiend. The World was void,
The populous and the powerful was a lump,
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless—
A lump of death—a chaos of hard clay.
The rivers, lakes, and ocean all stood still,
And nothing stirred within their silent depths,
Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea,
And their masts fell down piecemeal as they dropped
They slept on the abyss without a surge—
The waves were dead, the tides were in their grave,
The Moon, their mistress, had expired before;
The winds were withered in the stagnant air,
And the clouds perished; Darkness had no need
Of aid from them—She was the Universe.

Diodati, July 1816.

PROMETHEUS

I

TITAN! to whose immortal eyes
The sufferings of mortality,
Seen in their sad reality,
Were not as things that gods despise,
What was thy pity's recompense?
A silent suffering, and intense;
The rock, the vulture, and the chain,
All that the proud can feel of pain,
The agony they do not show,
The suffocating sense of woe,
Which speaks but in its loneliness,
And then is jealous lest the sky
Should have a listener, nor will sigh
Until its voice is echoless

II

Titan! to thee the strife was given
Between the suffering and the will,
Which torture where they cannot kill,
And the inexorable Heaven,
And the deaf tyranny of Fate,
The ruling principle of Hate,
Which for its pleasure doth create
The things it may annihilate,
Refused thee even the boon to die
The wretched gift Eternity
Was thine—and thou hast borne it well.

PROMETHEUS

All that the Thunderer wrung from thee
Was but the Menace which flung back
On him the torments of thy rack,
The fate thou didst so well foresee,
But would not to appease him tell;
And in thy Silence was his Sentence,
And in his Soul a vain repentance,
And evil dread so ill dissembled,
That in his hand the lightnings trembled

III

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind,
To render with thy precepts less
The sum of human wretchedness,
And strengthen Man with his own mind,
But baffled as thou wert from high,
Still in thy patient energy,
In the endurance, and repulse
Of thine impenetrable Spirit,
Which Earth and Heaven could not convulse.
A mighty lesson we inherit:
Thou art a symbol and a sign
To Mortals of their fate and force;
Like thee, Man is in part divine,
A troubled stream from a pure source,
And Man in portions can foresee
His own funereal destiny;
His wretchedness, and his resistance,
And his sad unallied existence
To which his Spirit may oppose
Itself—an equal to all woes—

PROMETHEUS

And a firm will, and a deep sense,
Which even in torture can descry
Its own concentered recompense,
Triumphant where it dares defy,
And making Death a Victory.

Diodati, July 1816.

STANZAS TO AUGUSTA

I

THOUGH the day of my Destiny's over,
And the star of my Fate hath declined,
Thy soft heart refused to discover
The faults which so many could find;
Though thy Soul with my grief was acquainted,
It shrunk not to share it with me,
And the Love which my Spirit hath painted
It never hath found but in *Thee*.

2

Then when Nature around me is smiling,
The last smile which answers to mine,
I do not believe it beguiling,
Because it reminds me of thine;
And when winds are at war with the ocean,
As the breasts I believed in with me,
If their billows excite an emotion,
It is that they bear me from *Thee*.

3

Though the rock of my last Hope is shivered,
And its fragments are sunk in the wave,
Though I feel that my soul is delivered
To Pain—it shall not be its slave.
There is many a pang to pursue me.
They may crush, but they shall not contemn—
They may torture, but shall not subdue me—
'Tis of *Thee* that I think—not of them.

STANZAS TO AUGUSTA

4

Though human, thou didst not deceive me,
Though woman, thou didst not forsake,
Though loved, thou forborest to grieve me,
Though slandered, thou never couldst shake, —
Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me,
Though parted, it was not to fly,
Though watchful, 'twas not to defame me,
Nor, mute, that the world might belie.

5

Yet I blame not the World, nor despise it,
Nor the war of the many with one,
If my Soul was not fitted to prize it,
'Twas folly not sooner to shun:
And if dearly that error hath cost me,
And more than I once could foresee,
I have found that, whatever it lost me,
It could not deprive me of *Thee*.

6

From the wreck of the past, which hath perished,
Thus much I at least may recall,
It hath taught me that what I most cherished
Deserved to be dearest of all.
In the Desert a fountain is springing,
In the wide waste there still is a tree,
And a bird in the solitude singing,
Which speaks to my spirit of *Thee*

July 24, 1816

EPISTLE TO AUGUSTA

I

MY Sister! my sweet Sister! if a name
Dearer and purer were, it should be thine
Mountains and seas divide us, but I claim
No tears, but tenderness to answer mine:
Go where I will, to me thou art the same—
A loved regret which I would not resign.
There yet are two things in my destiny, —
A world to roam through, and a home with thee.

II

The first were nothing—had I still the last,
It were the haven of my happiness;
But other claims and other ties thou hast,
And mine is not the wish to make them less
A strange doom is thy father's son's, and past
Recalling, as it lies beyond redress;
Reversed for him our grandsire's fate of yore, —
He had no rest at sea, nor I on shore

III

If my inheritance of storms hath been
In other elements, and on the rocks
Of perils, overlooked or unforeseen,
I have sustained my share of worldly shocks,
The fault was mine; nor do I seek to screen
My errors with defensive paradox;
I have been cunning in mine overthrow,
The careful pilot of my proper woe.

EPISTLE TO AUGUSTA

IV

Mine were my faults, and mine be their reward.
My whole life was a contest, since the day
That gave me being, gave me that which marred
The gift,—a fate, or will, that walked astray;
And I at times have found the struggle hard,
And thought of shaking off my bonds of clay
But now I fain would for a time survive,
If but to see what next can well arrive

V

Kingdoms and Empires in my little day
I have outlived, and yet I am not old,
And when I look on this, the petty spray
Of my own years of trouble, which have rolled
Like a wild bay of breakers, melts away.
Something—I know not what—does still uphold
A spirit of slight patience;—not in vain,
Even for its own sake, do we purchase Pain.

VI

Perhaps the workings of defiance stir
Within me—or, perhaps, a cold despair
Brought on when ills habitually recur,—
Perhaps a kinder clime, or purer air,
(For even to this may change of soul refer,
And with light armour we may learn to bear,)
Have taught me a strange quiet, which was not
The chief companion of a calmer lot.

EPISTLE TO AUGUSTA

VII

I feel almost at times as I have felt
In happy childhood, trees, and flowers, and brooks,
Which do remember me of where I dwelt,
Ere my young mind was sacrificed to books,
Come as of yore upon me, and can melt
My heart with recognition of their looks,
And even at moments I could think I see
Some living thing to love—but none like thee.

VIII

Here are the Alpine landscapes which create
A fund for contemplation,—to admire
Is a brief feeling of a trivial date;
But something worthier do such scenes inspire;
Here to be lonely is not desolate,
For much I view which I could most desire,
And, above all, a Lake I can behold
Lovelier, not dearer, than our own of old.

IX

Oh that thou wert but with me!—but I grow
The fool of my own wishes, and forget
The solitude which I have vaunted so
Has lost its praise in this but one regret;
There may be others which I less may show,—
I am not of the plaintive mood, and yet
I feel an ebb in my philosophy,
And the tide rising in my altered eye

EPISTLE TO AUGUSTA

X

I did remind thee of our own dear Lake,
By the old Hall which may be mine no more
Leman's is fair, but think not I forsake
The sweet remembrance of a dearer shore
Sad havoc Time must with my memory make,
Ere that or thou can fade these eyes before;
Though, like all things which I have loved, they are
Resigned for ever, or divided far.

XI

The world is all before me; I but ask
Of Nature that with which she will comply—
It is but in her Summer's sun to bask,
To mingle with the quiet of her sky,
To see her gentle face without a mask,
And never gaze on it with apathy.
She was my early friend, and now shall be
My sister—till I look again on thee

XII

I can reduce all feelings but this one;
And that I would not;—for at length I see
Such scenes as those wherein my life begun—
The earliest—even the only paths for me.
Had I but sooner learnt the crowd to shun,
I had been better than I now can be,
The Passions which have torn me would have slept;
I had not suffered, and *thou* hadst not wept.

EPISTLE TO AUGUSTA

XIII

With false Ambition what had I to do?
Little with Love, and least of all with Fame;
And yet they came unsought, and with me grew,
And made me all which they can make—a Name
Yet this was not the end I did pursue,
Surely I once beheld a nobler aim
But all is over—I am one the more
To baffled millions which have gone before

XIV

And for the future, this world's future may
From me demand but little of my care:
I have outlived myself by many a day,
Having survived so many things that were,
My years have been no slumber, but the prey
Of ceaseless vigils, for I had the share
Of life which might have filled a century,
Before its fourth in time had passed me by

XV

And for the remnant which may be to come
I am content; and for the past I feel
Not thankless,—for within the crowded sum
Of struggles, Happiness at times would steal,
And, for the present, I would not benumb
My feelings farther.—Nor shall I conceal
That with all this I still can look around,
And worship Nature with a thought profound.

EPISTLE TO AUGUSTA

XVI

For thee, my own sweet sister, in thy heart
I know myself secure, as thou in mine,
We were and are—I am, even as thou art—
Beings who ne'er each other can resign;
It is the same, together or apart—
From Life's commencement to its slow decline
We are entwined—let Death come slow or fast,
The tie which bound the first endures the last!

July 1816.

INCANTATION FROM "MANFRED"

WHEN the Moon is on the wave,
And the glow-worm in the grass,
And the meteor on the grave,
And the wisp on the morass;
When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answered owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still
In the shadow of the hill,
Shall my soul be upon thine,
With a power and with a sign.

Though thy slumber may be deep,
Yet thy Spirit shall not sleep,
There are shades which will not vanish,
There are thoughts thou canst not banish;
By a Power to thee unknown,
Thou canst never be alone,
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gathered in a cloud;
And for ever shalt thou dwell
In the spirit of this spell.

Though thou seest me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
Must be near thee, and hath been;
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turned around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the spot,
And the power which thou dost feel
Shall be what thou must conceal.

INCANTATION FROM "MANFRED"

And a magic voice and verse
Hath baptized thee with a curse,
And a Spirit of the air
Hath begirt thee with a snare;
In the wind there is a voice
Shall forbid thee to rejoice;
And to thee shall Night deny
All the quiet of her sky;
And the day shall have a sun,
Which shall make thee wish it done.

From thy false tears I did distil
An essence which hath strength to kill,
From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in its blackest spring,
From thy own smile I snatched the snake,
For there it coiled as in a brake,
From thy own lip I drew the charm
Which gave all these their chiefest harm,
In proving every poison known,
I found the strongest was thine own.

By the cold breast and serpent smile,
By thy unfathomed gulfs of guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy;
By the perfection of thine art
Which passed for human thine own heart.
By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee! and compel
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!

INCANTATION FROM "MANFRED"

And on thy head I pour the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial;
Nor to slumber, nor to die,
Shall be in thy destiny;
Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear;
Lo! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound thee,
O'er thy heart and brain together
Hath the word been passed—now wither!

FROM
CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE



From
CANTO THE THIRD

“Afin que cette application vous forçât à penser à
autre chose. Il n’y a en vérité de remède que celui-là
et le temps.”

Lettres du Roi de Prusse et de M. D’Alembert.



From
CANTO THE FOURTH

“Visto ho Toscana, Lombardia, Romagna.
Quel monte che divide, e quel che serra
Italia, e un mare e l’altro, che la bagna.”

Ariosto, Satira IV.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

I

IS thy face like thy mother's, my fair child!
ADA! sole daughter of my house and heart?
When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,
And then we parted, — not as now we part,
But with a hope. —

Awaking with a start,
The waters heave around me, and on high
The winds lift up their voices. I depart,
Whither I know not, but the hour's gone by,
When Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye

II

Once more upon the waters! yet once more!
And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
That knows his rider. Welcome to their roar!
Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er it lead!
Though the strained mast should quiver as a reed,
And the rent canvass fluttering strew the gale,
Still must I on, for I am as a weed,
Flung from the rock, on Ocean's foam, to sail
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail.

III

In my youth's summer I did sing of One,
The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind,
Again I seize the theme, then but begun,
And bear it with me, as the rushing wind
Bears the cloud onwards in that Tale I find
The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears,
Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind,
O'er which all heavily the journeying years
Plod the last sands of life, — where not a flower appears.

CANTO THE THIRD

V

Since my young days of passion—joy or pain—
Perchance my heart and harp have lost a string—
And both may jar· it may be that in vain
I would essay, as I have sung, to sing.
Yet, though a dreary strain, to this I cling;
So that it wean me from the weary dream
Of selfish grief or gladness—so it fling
Forgetfulness around me—it shall seem
To me, though to none else, a not ungrateful theme.

V

He, who grown agèd in this world of woe,
In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life,
So that no wonder waits him—nor below
Can Love or Sorrow, Fame, Ambition, Strife,
Cut to his heart again with the keen knife
Of silent, sharp endurance—he can tell
Why Thought seeks refuge in lone caves, yet rife
With airy images, and shapes which dwell
Still unimpaired, though old, in the Soul's haunted cell.

VI

'Tis to create, and in creating live
A being more intense, that we endow
With form our fancy, gaining as we give
The life we image, even as I do now—
What am I? Nothing. but not so art thou,
Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,
Invisible but gazing, as I glow
Mixed with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,
And feeling still with thee in my crushed feelings' dearth.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

VII

Yet must I think less wildly.—I *have* thought
Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame;
And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame,
My springs of life were poisoned 'Tis too late!
Yet am I changed, though still enough the same
In strength to bear what Time can not abate,
And feed on bitter fruits without accusing Fate.

VIII

Something too much of this —but now 'tis past,
And the spell closes with its silent seal.
Long absent HAROLD re-appears at last—
He of the breast which fain no more would feel,
Wrung with the wounds which kill not, but ne'er heal,
Yet Time, who changes all, had altered him
In soul and aspect as in age years steal
Fire from the mind as vigour from the limb;
And Life's enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim

IX

His had been quaffed too quickly, and he found
The dregs were wormwood; but he filled again,
And from a purer fount, on holier ground,
And deemed its spring perpetual—but in vain!
Still round him clung invisibly a chain
Which galled for ever, fettering though unseen,
And heavy though it clanked not, worn with pain,
Which pined although it spoke not, and grew keen,
Entering with every step he took through many a scene.

CANTO THE THIRD

X

Secure in guarded coldness, he had mixed
Again in fancied safety with his kind,
And deemed his spirit now so firmly fixed
And sheathed with an invulnerable mind,
That, if no joy, no sorrow lurked behind;
And he, as one, might 'midst the many stand
Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find
Fit speculation—such as in strange land
He found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand

XI

But who can view the ripened rose, nor seek
To wear it? who can curiously behold
The smoothness and the sheen of Beauty's cheek,
Nor feel the heart can never all grow old?
Who can contemplate Fame through clouds unfold
The star which rises o'er her steep, nor climb?
Harold, once more within the vortex, rolled
On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
Yet with a nobler aim than in his Youth's fond prime.

XII

But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with Man; with whom he held
Little in common, untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul was quelled
In youth by his own thoughts, still uncompelled,
He would not yield dominion of his mind
To Spirits against whom his own rebelled;
Proud though in desolation—which could find
A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

XIII

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
Where rolled the Ocean, thereon was his home,
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,
He had the passion and the power to roam,
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tome
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
For Nature's pages glassed by sunbeams on the lake.

XIV

Like the Chaldean, he could watch the stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings bright
As their own beams; and earth, and earth-born jars,
And human frailties, were forgotten quite.
Could he have kept his spirit to that flight
He had been happy; but this clay will sink
Its spark immortal, envying it the light
To which it mounts, as if to break the link
That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.

XV

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,
Drooped as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing,
To whom the boundless air alone were home:
Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,
As eagerly the barred-up bird will beat
His breast and beak against his wiry dome
Till the blood tinge his plumage—so the heat
Of his impeded Soul would through his bosom eat.

CANTO THE THIRD

XVI

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
With nought of Hope left—but with less of gloom;
The very knowledge that he lived in vain,
That all was over on this side the tomb,
Had made Despair a smilingness assume,
Which, though 'twere wild,—as on the plundered wreck
When mariners would madly meet their doom
With draughts intemperate on the sinking deck,—
Did yet inspire a cheer, which he forbore to check.

XVII

Stop!—for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!
An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!
Is the spot marked with no colossal bust?
Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
None, but *the moral's truth* tells simpler so
As the ground was before, thus let it be,—
How that red rain hath made the harvest grow!
And is this all the world has gained by thee,
Thou first and last of fields! king-making Victory?

XVIII

And Harold stands upon this place of skulls,
The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo!
How in an hour the Power which gave annals
Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too!—
In “pride of place” here last the Eagle flew,
Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain,
Pierced by the shaft of banded nations through;
Ambition's life and labours all were vain—
He wears the shattered links of the World's broken chain

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

XIX

Fit retribution ! Gaul may champ the bit
And foam in fetters;—but is Earth more free?
Did nations combat to make *One* submit?
Or league to teach all Kings true Sovereignty?
What ! shall reviving Thralldom again be
The patched-up Idol of enlightened days?
Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we
Pay the Wolf homage? proffering lowly gaze
And servile knees to Thrones? No ! *prove* before ye praise !

XX

If not, o'er one fallen Despot boast no more !
In vain fair cheeks were furrowed with hot tears
For Europe's flowers long rooted up before
The trampler of her vineyards, in vain, years
Of death, depopulation, bondage, fears,
Have all been borne, and broken by the accord
Of roused-up millions all that most endears
Glory, is when the myrtle wreathes a Sword—
Such as Harmodius drew on Athens' tyrant Lord

XXI

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's Capital had gathered then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry—and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men ;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell;
But hush ! hark ! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell !

CANTO THE THIRD

XXII

Did ye not hear it?—No—'twas but the Wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street,
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet—
But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat,
And nearer—clearer—deadlier than before!
Arm! Arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar!

XXIII

Within a windowed niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated Chieftain; he did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear,
And when they smiled because he deemed it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too well
Which stretched his father on a bloody bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell;
He rushed into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

XXIV

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro—
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness—
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated, who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise!

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

XXV

And there was mounting in hot haste—the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war—
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the Morning Star,
While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips—“The foe! They come!
they come!”

XXVI

And wild and high the “Cameron’s Gathering” rose!
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn’s hills
Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes —
How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills
Their mountain pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan’s, Donald’s fame rings in each clansman’s ears!

XXVII

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with Nature’s tear-drops, as they pass—
Grieving, if aught inanimate e’er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave,—alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living Valour, rolling on the foe
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

CANTO THE THIRD

XXVIII

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life;—
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay;
The Midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The Morn the marshalling in arms,—the Day
Battle's magnificently-stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is covered thick with other clay
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent!

XXIX

Their praise is hymned by loftier harps than mine;
Yet one I would select from that proud throng,
Partly because they blend me with his line,
And partly that I did his Sire some wrong,
And partly that bright names will hallow song,
And his was of the bravest, and when showered
The death-bolts deadliest the thinned files along,
Even where the thickest of War's tempest lowered,
They reached no nobler breast than thine, young, gallant
Howard!

XXX

There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee,
And mine were nothing, had I such to give,
But when I stood beneath the fresh green tree,
Which living waves where thou didst cease to live,
And saw around me the wide field revive
With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring
Come forth her work of gladness to contrive,
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,
I turned from all she brought to those she could not bring.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

XXXI

I turned to thee, to thousands, of whom each
And one as all a ghastly gap did make
In his own kind and kindred, whom to teach
Forgetfulness were mercy for their sake;
The Archangel's trump, not Glory's, must awake
Those whom they thirst for; though the sound of Fame
May for a moment soothe, it cannot slake
The fever of vain longing, and the name
So honoured but assumes a stronger, bitterer claim.

XXXII

They mourn, but smile at length—and, smiling, mourn:
The tree will wither long before it fall,
The hull drives on, though mast and sail be torn;
The roof-tree sinks, but moulders on the hall
In massy hoariness; the ruined wall
Stands when its wind-worn battlements are gone;
The bars survive the captive they enthrall,
The day drags through though storms keep out the sun,
And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on.

XXXIII

Even as a broken Mirror, which the glass
In every fragment multiplies—and makes
A thousand images of one that was
The same—and still the more, the more it breaks,
And thus the heart will do which not forsakes,
Living in shattered guise; and still, and cold,
And bloodless, with its sleepless sorrow aches,
Yet withers on till all without is old,
Showing no visible sign, for such things are untold.

CANTO THE THIRD

XXXIV

There is a very life in our despair,
Vitality of poison,—a quick root
Which feeds these deadly branches; for it were
As nothing did we die; but Life will suit
Itself to Sorrow's most detested fruit,
Like to the apples on the Dead Sea's shore,
All ashes to the taste: Did man compute
Existence by enjoyment, and count o'er
Such hours 'gainst years of life,—say, would he name threescore?

XXXV- 35

The Psalmist numbered out the years of man:
They are enough, and if thy tale be *true*,
Thou, who didst grudge him even that fleeting span,
More than enough, thou fatal Waterloo!
Millions of tongues record thee, and anew
Their children's lips shall echo them, and say—
“Here, where the sword united nations drew,
Our countrymen were warring on that day!”
And this is much—and all which will not pass away.



XLVI - 46

AWAY with these! true Wisdom's world will be
Within its own creation, or in thine,
Maternal Nature! for who teems like thee,
Thus on the banks of thy majestic Rhine?

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

There Harold gazes on a work divine,
A blending of all beauties; streams and dells,
Fruit, foliage, crag, wood, cornfield, mountain, vine,
And chiefless castles breathing stern farewells
From gray but leafy walls, where Ruin greenly dwells

XLVII

And there they stand, as stands a lofty mind,
Worn, but unstooping to the baser crowd,
All tenantless, save to the crannying Wind,
Or holding dark communion with the Cloud
There was a day when they were young and proud;
Banners on high, and battles passed below,
But they who fought are in a bloody shroud,
And those which waved are shredless dust ere now,
And the bleak battlements shall bear no future blow.

XLVIII

Beneath these battlements, within those walls,
Power dwelt amidst her passions; in proud state
Each robber chief upheld his armed halls,
Doing his evil will, nor less elate
Than mightier heroes of a longer date.
What want these outlaws conquerors should have,
But History's purchased page to call them great?
A wider space—an ornamented grave?
Their hopes were not less warm, their souls were full as brave.

XLIX

In their baronial feuds and single fields,
What deeds of prowess unrecorded died!
And Love, which lent a blazon to their shields,
With emblems well devised by amorous pride,

CANTO THE THIRD

Through all the mail of iron hearts would glide;
But still their flame was fierceness, and drew on
Keen contest and destruction near allied,
And many a tower for some fair mischief won,
Saw the discoloured Rhine beneath its ruin run.

L

But Thou, exulting and abounding river !
Making thy waves a blessing as they flow
Through banks whose beauty would endure for ever
Could man but leave thy bright creation so,
Nor its fair promise from the surface mow
With the sharp scythe of conflict,—then to see
Thy valley of sweet waters, were to know
Earth paved like Heaven—and to seem such to me,
Even now what wants thy stream?—that it should Lethe be

LI

A thousand battles have assailed thy banks,
But these and half their fame have passed away,
And Slaughter heaped on high his weltering ranks
Their very graves are gone, and what are they?
Thy tide washed down the blood of yesterday,
And all was stainless, and on thy clear stream
Glassed, with its dancing light, the sunny ray;
But o'er the blackened Memory's blighting dream
Thy waves would vainly roll, all sweeping as they seem



CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

LIX

ADIEU to thee, fair Rhine! How long delighted
The stranger fain would linger on his way!
Thine is a scene alike where souls united,
Or lonely Contemplation thus might stray,
And could the ceaseless vultures cease to prey
On self-condemning bosoms, it were here,
Where Nature, nor too sombre nor too gay,
Wild but not rude, awful yet not austere,
Is to the mellow Earth as Autumn to the year.

LX

Adieu to thee again! a vain adieu!
There can be no farewell to scene like thine,
The mind is coloured by thy every hue;
And if reluctantly the eyes resign
Their cherished gaze upon thee, lovely Rhine!
'Tis with the thankful glance of parting praise;
More mighty spots may rise—more glaring shine,
But none unite, in one attaching maze,
The brilliant, fair, and soft,—the glories of old days,

LXI

The negligently grand, the fruitful bloom
Of coming ripeness, the white city's sheen,
The rolling stream, the precipice's gloom,
The forest's growth, and Gothic walls between,—
The wild rocks shaped, as they had turrets been,
In mockery of man's art, and these withal
A race of faces happy as the scene,
Whose fertile bounties here extend to all,
Still springing o'er thy banks, though Empires near them fall

CANTO THE THIRD



LXII

BUT these recede. Above me are the Alps,
The Palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
Have pinnaced in clouds their snowy scalps,
And throned Eternity in icy halls
Of cold Sublimity, where forms and falls
The Avalanche—the thunderbolt of snow!
All that expands the spirit, yet appals,
Gather around these summits, as to show
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain man below.



LXVIII

LAKE Lemman woos me with its crystal face,
The mirror where the stars and mountains view
The stillness of their aspect in each trace
Its clear depth yields of their far height and hue:
There is too much of Man here, to look through
With a fit mind the might which I behold,
But soon in me shall Loneliness renew
Thoughts hid, but not less cherished than of old,
Ere mingling with the herd had penned me in their fold.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

LXIX

To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind
All are not fit with them to stir and toil,
Nor is it discontent to keep the mind
Deep in its fountain, lest it overboil
In the hot throng, where we become the spoil
Of our infection, till, too late and long,
We may deplore and struggle with the coil,
In wretched interchange of wrong for wrong
Midst a contentious world, striving where none are strong.

LXX

There, in a moment, we may plunge our years
In fatal penitence, and in the blight
Of our own Soul turn all our blood to tears,
And colour things to come with hues of Night,
The race of life becomes a hopeless flight
To those that walk in darkness on the sea
The boldest steer but where their ports invite—
But there are wanderers o'er Eternity,
Whose bark drives on and on, and anchored ne'er shall be

LXXI

Is it not better, then, to be alone,
And love Earth only for its earthly sake?
By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,
Or the pure bosom of its nursing Lake,
Which feeds it as a mother who doth make
A fair but froward infant her own care,
Kissing its cries away as these awake,—
Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
Than join the crushing crowd, doomed to inflict or bear?

CANTO THE THIRD

LXXII

I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture: I can see
Nothing to loathe in Nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
Classed among creatures, when the soul can flee,
And with the sky—the peak—the heaving plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle—and not in vain.

LXXIII

And thus I am absorbed, and this is life —
I look upon the peopled desert past,
As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to Sorrow I was cast,
To act and suffer, but remount at last
With a fresh pinion, which I feel to spring,
Though young, yet waxing vigorous as the blast
Which it would cope with; on delighted wing,
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being cling.

LXXIV

And when, at length, the mind shall be all free
From what it hates in this degraded form,
Reft of its carnal life, save what shall be
Existent happier in the fly and worm,—
When Elements to Elements conform,
And dust is as it should be, shall I not
Feel all I see less dazzling but more warm?
The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each spot?
Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot?

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

LXXV

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part
Of me and of my Soul, as I of them ?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion ? should I not contemn
All objects, if compared with these ? and stem
A tide of suffering, rather than forego
Such feelings for the hard and worldly phlegm
Of those whose eyes are only turned below,
Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts which dare not glow ?



LXXXV

CLEAR, placid Leman ! thy contrasted lake,
With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring
This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
To waft me from distraction, once I loved
Torn Ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
Sounds sweet as if a Sister's voice reproved,
That I with stern delights should e'er have been so moved.

LXXXVI

It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
Mellowed and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
Save darkened Jura, whose cap't heights appear
Precipitously steep ; and drawing near,

CANTO THE THIRD

There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more.

LXXXVII

He is an evening reveller, who makes
His life an infancy, and sings his fill;
At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
But that is fancy—for the Starlight dew
All silently their tears of Love instil,
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

LXXXVIII

Ye Stars! which are the poetry of Heaven!
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
Of men and empires,—'tis to be forgiven,
That in our aspirations to be great,
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
And claim a kindred with you, for ye are
A Beauty and a Mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar,
That Fortune, — Fame, — Power, — Life, have named
themselves a Star.

LXXXIX

All Heaven and Earth are still—though not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep —
All Heaven and Earth are still: From the high host

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Of stars, to the lulled lake and mountain-coast,
All is concentered in a life intense,
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of Being, and a sense
Of that which is of all Creator and Defence.

XC

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we are *least* alone;
A truth, which through our being then doth melt,
And purifies from self it is a tone,
The soul and source of Music, which makes known
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm
Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
Binding all things with beauty,—'twould disarm
The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm

XCI

Not vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places, and the peak
Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak,
Upreared of human hands Come, and compare
Columns and idol-dwellings—Goth or Greek—
With Nature's realms of worship, Earth and Air—
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy prayer!



CANTO THE THIRD

XCII

THE sky is changed!—and such a change! Oh Night,
And Storm, and Darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in Woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

XCIII

And this is in the Night —Most glorious Night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,—
A portion of the tempest and of thee!
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 'tis black,—and now, the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young Earthquake's birth

XCIV

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his way between
Heights which appear as lovers who have parted
In hate, whose mining depths so intervene,
That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted.
Though in their souls, which thus each other thwarted,
Love was the very root of the fond rage
Which blighted their life's bloom, and then departed.—
Itself expired, but leaving them an age
Of years all winters,—war within themselves to wage.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

XCV

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath cleft his way,
The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en his stand
For here, not one, but many, make their play
And fling their thunder-bolts from hand to hand,
Flashing and cast around of all the band,
The brightest through these parted hills hath forked
His lightnings,—as if he did understand,
That in such gaps as Desolation worked,
There the hot shaft should blast whatever therein lurked

XCVI

Sky—Mountains—River—Winds—Lake—Lightnings! ye
With night, and clouds, and thunder—and a Soul
To make these felt and feeling, well may be
Things that have made me watchful, the far roll
Of your departing voices, is the knoll
Of what in me is sleepless,—if I rest
But where of ye, O Tempests! is the goal?
Are ye like those within the human breast?
Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some high nest?

XCVII

Could I embody and unbosom now
That which is most within me,—could I wreak
My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
Soul—heart—mind—passions—feelings—strong or weak—
All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
Bear, know, feel—and yet breathe—into *one* word,
And that one word were Lightning, I would speak,
But as it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.

CANTO THE THIRD



XCVIII

THE Morn is up again, the dewy Morn,
With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom—
Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,
And living as if earth contained no tomb, —
And glowing into day: we may resume
The march of our existence and thus I,
Still on thy shores, fair Leman! may find room
And food for meditation, nor pass by
Much, that may give us pause, if pondered fittingly.

XCIX

Clarens! sweet Clarens, birthplace of deep Love!
Thine air is the young breath of passionate Thought,
Thy trees take root in Love; the snows above,
The very Glaciers have his colours caught,
And Sun-set into rose-hues sees them wrought
By rays which sleep there lovingly: the rocks,
The permanent crags, tell here of Love, who sought
In them a refuge from the worldly shocks,
Which stir and sting the Soul with Hope that woos, then mock!

C

Clarens! by heavenly feet thy paths are trod, —
Undying Love's, who here ascends a throne
To which the steps are mountains, where the God
Is a pervading Life and Light, —so shown

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Not on those summits solely, nor alone
In the still cave and forest, o'er the flower
His eye is sparkling, and his breath hath blown,
His soft and summer breath, whose tender power
Passes the strength of storms in their most desolate hour

CI

All things are here of *Him*, from the black pines,
Which are his shade on high, and the loud roar
Of torrents, where he listeneth, to the vines
Which slope his green path downward to the shore,
Where the bowed Waters meet him, and adore,
Kissing his feet with murmurs, and the Wood,
The covert of old trees, with trunks all hoar,
But light leaves, young as joy, stands where it stood,
Offering to him, and his, a populous solitude

CII

A populous solitude of bees and birds,
And fairy-formed and many-coloured things,
Who worship him with notes more sweet than words,
And innocently open their glad wings,
Fearless and full of life. the gush of springs,
And fall of lofty fountains, and the bend
Of stirring branches, and the bud which brings
The swiftest thought of Beauty, here extend
Mingling—and made by Love—unto one mighty end

CIII

He who hath loved not, here would learn that lore,
And make his heart a spirit; he who knows
That tender mystery, will love the more,
For this is Love's recess, where vain men's woes,

CANTO THE THIRD

And the world's waste, have driven him far from those,
For 'tis his nature to advance or die;
He stands not still, but or decays, or grows
Into a boundless blessing, which may vie
With the immortal lights, in its eternity!

CIV

'Twas not for fiction chose Rousseau the spot,
Peopling it with affections, but he found
It was the scene which Passion must allot
To the Mind's purified beings; 'twas the ground
Where early Love his Psyche's zone unbound,
And hallowed it with loveliness; 'tis lone,
And wonderful, and deep, and hath a sound,
And sense, and sight of sweetness; here the Rhone
Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps have reared a throne.



CV

LAUSANNE¹ and Ferney¹ ye have been the abodes
Of Names which unto you bequeathed a name;
Mortals, who sought and found, by dangerous roads,
A path to perpetuity of Fame
They were gigantic minds, and their steep aim
Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile
Thoughts which should call down thunder, and the flame
Of Heaven again assailed—if Heaven, the while,
On man and man's research could deign do more than smile.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

CVI

The one was fire and fickleness, a child
Most mutable in wishes, but in mind
A wit as various, — gay, grave, sage, or wild, —
Historian, bard, philosopher, combined;
He multiplied himself among mankind,
The Proteus of their talents. But his own
Breathed most in ridicule, — which, as the wind,
Blew where it listed, laying all things prone, —
Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake a throne.

CVII

The other, deep and slow, exhausting thought,
And hiving wisdom with each studious year,
In meditation dwelt — with learning wrought,
And shaped his weapon with an edge severe,
Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer,
The lord of irony, — that master spell,
Which stung his foes to wrath, which grew from fear,
And doomed him to the zealot's ready Hell,
Which answers to all doubts so eloquently well



CXI

THUS far have I proceeded in a theme
Renewed with no kind auspices. — to feel
We are not what we have been, and to deem
We are not what we should be, — and to steel

CANTO THE THIRD

The heart against itself; and to conceal,
With a proud caution, love, or hate, or aught, —
Passion or feeling, purpose, grief, or zeal,
Which is the tyrant Spirit of our thought, —
Is a stern task of soul:—No matter, —it is taught.

CXII

And for these words, thus woven into song,
It may be that they are a harmless wile, —
The colouring of the scenes which fleet along,
Which I would seize, in passing, to beguile
My breast, or that of others, for a while
Fame is the thirst of youth, —but I am not
So young as to regard men's frown or smile,
As loss or guerdon of a glorious lot, —
I stood and stand alone, —remembered or forgot

CXIII

I have not loved the World, nor the World me,
I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bowed
To its idolatries a patient knee,
Nor coined my cheek to smiles, —nor cried aloud
In worship of an echo: in the crowd
They could not deem me one of such—I stood
Among them, but not of them—in a shroud
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still could,
Had I not filed my mind, which thus itself subdued

CXIV

I have not loved the World, nor the World me, —
But let us part fair foes, I do believe,
Though I have found them not, that there may be
Words which are things, —hopes which will not deceive,

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

And Virtues which are merciful, nor weave
Snares for the failing I would also deem
O'er others' griefs that some sincerely grieve—
That two, or one, are almost what they seem,—
That Goodness is no name—and Happiness no dream.

CXV

My daughter! with thy name this song begun!
My daughter! with thy name thus much shall end!—
I see thee not,—I hear thee not,—but none
Can be so wrapt in thee, Thou art the Friend
To whom the shadows of far years extend.
Albeit my brow thou never should'st behold,
My voice shall with thy future visions blend,
And reach into thy heart,—when mine is cold,—
A token and a tone, even from thy father's mould

CXVI

To aid thy mind's development,—to watch
Thy dawn of little joys,—to sit and see
Almost thy very growth,—to view thee catch
Knowledge of objects,—wonders yet to thee!
To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee,
And print on thy soft cheek a parent's kiss,—
This, it should seem, was not reserved for me,
Yet this was in my nature:—as it is,
I know not what is there, yet something like to this

CXVII

Yet, though dull Hate as duty should be taught,
I know that thou wilt love me,—though my name
Should be shut from thee, as a spell still fraught
With desolation, and a broken claim

CANTO THE THIRD

Though the grave closed between us, —'twere the same—
I know that thou wilt love me—though to drain
My blood from out thy being were an aim,
And an attainment, —all would be in vain, —
Still thou would'st love me, still that more than life retain

CXVIII

The child of Love! though born in bitterness,
And nurtured in Convulsion! Of thy sire
These were the elements, —and thine no less.
As yet such are around thee, —but thy fire
Shall be more tempered, and thy hope far higher.
Sweet be thy cradled slumbers! O'er the sea
And from the mountains where I now respire,
Fain would I waft such blessing upon thee,
As—with a sigh—I deem thou might'st have been to me!

1816—17.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

I

I STOOD in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs,
A Palace and a prison on each hand
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the Enchanter's wand
A thousand Years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
O'er the far times, when many a subject land
Looked to the wingéd Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles!

II

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from Ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A Ruler of the waters and their powers
And such she was,—her daughters had their dowers
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East
Poured in her lap all gems in sparkling showers
In purple was she robed, and of her feast
Monarchs partook, and deemed their dignity increased.

III

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,
And silent rows the songless Gondolier,
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
And Music meets not always now the ear
Those days are gone—but Beauty still is here
States fall—Arts fade—but Nature doth not die,
Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,
The pleasant place of all festivity,
The Revel of the earth—the Masque of Italy!

CANTO THE FOURTH

IV

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
Her name in story, and her long array
Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
Above the Dogeless city's vanished sway,
Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor,
And Pierre, can not be swept or worn away—
The keystones of the arch¹ though all were o'er,
For us repeopled were the solitary shore.

V

The Beings of the Mind are not of clay:
Essentially immortal, they create
And multiply in us a brighter ray
And more beloved existence: that which Fate
Prohibits to dull life, in this our state
Of mortal bondage, by these Spirits supplied,
First exiles, then replaces what we hate,
Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,
And with a fresher growth replenishing the void.

VI

Such is the refuge of our youth and age—
The first from Hope, the last from Vacancy;
And this wan feeling peoples many a page—
And, may be, that which grows beneath mine eye:
Yet there are things whose strong reality
Outshines our fairy-land, in shape and hues
More beautiful than our fantastic sky,
And the strange constellations which the Muse
O'er her wild universe is skilful to diffuse:

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

VII

I saw or dreamed of such,—but let them go,—
They came like Truth—and disappeared like dreams,
And whatsoe'er they were—are now but so
I could replace them if I would, still teems
My mind with many a form which aptly seems
Such as I sought for, and at moments found,
Let these too go—for waking Reason deems
Such over-weening phantasies unsound,
And other voices speak, and other sights surround.



XI

THE spouseless Adriatic mourns her Lord,
And annual marriage now no more renewed—
The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored,
Neglected garment of her widowhood!
St Mark yet sees his Lion where he stood
Stand, but in mockery of his withered power,
Over the proud Place where an Emperor sued,
And monarchs gazed and envied in the hour
When Venice was a Queen with an unequalled dower.

XII

The Suabian sued, and now the Austrian reigns—
An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt,
Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains
Clank over sceptred cities; Nations melt

CANTO THE FOURTH

From Power's high pinnacle, when they have felt
The sunshine for a while, and downward go
Like lawine loosened from the mountain's belt;
Oh for one hour of blind old Dandolo!
Th' octogenarian chief, Byzantium's conquering foe.

XIII

Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of brass,
Their gilded collars glittering in the sun;
But is not Doria's menace come to pass?
Are they not *bridled*?—Venice, lost and won,
Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,
Sinks, like a sea-weed, into whence she rose!
Better be whelmed beneath the waves, and shun,
Even in Destruction's depth, her foreign foes,
From whom Submission wrings an infamous repose.

XIV

In youth She was all glory,—a new Tyre,—
Her very by-word sprung from Victory,
The “Planter of the Lion,” which through fire
And blood she bore o'er subject Earth and Sea,
Though making many slaves, Herself still free,
And Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite;
Witness Troy's rival, Candia! Vouch it, ye
Immortal waves that saw Lepanto's fight!
For ye are names no Time nor Tyranny can blight.

XV

Statues of glass—all shivered—the long file
Of her dead Doges are declined to dust;
But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous pile
Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid trust;

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Their sceptre broken, and their sword in rust,
Have yielded to the stranger empty halls,
Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must
Too oft remind her who and what enthrals,
Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls

XVI

When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse,
And fettered thousands bore the yoke of war,
Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse,
Her voice their only ransom from afar.
See! as they chant the tragic hymn, the car
Of the o'ermastered Victor stops—the reins
Fall from his hands—his idle scimitar
Starts from its belt—he rends his captive's chains,
And bids him thank the Bard for freedom and his strains

XVII

Thus, Venice! if no stronger claim were thine,
Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot—
Thy choral memory of the Bard divine,
Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the knot
Which ties thee to thy tyrants, and thy lot
Is shameful to the nations,—most of all,
Albion! to thee the Ocean queen should not
Abandon Ocean's children, in the fall
Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall

XVIII

I loved her from my boyhood—she to me
Was as a fairy city of the heart,
Rising like water-columns from the sea—
Of Joy the sojourn, and of Wealth the mart,

CANTO THE FOURTH

And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakespeare's art,
Had stamped her image in me, and even so,
Although I found her thus, we did not part,
Perchance even dearer in her day of woe,
Than when she was a boast, a marvel, and a show.



XXVII

THE Moon is up, and yet it is not night—
Sunset divides the sky with her—a sea
Of glory streams along the Alpine height
Of blue Friuli's mountains, Heaven is free
From clouds, but of all colours seems to be,—
Melted to one vast Iris of the West,—
Where the Day joins the past Eternity;
While, on the other hand, meek Dian's crest
Floats through the azure air—an island of the blest!

XXVIII

A single star is at her side, and reigns
With her o'er half the lovely heaven, but still
Yon sunny Sea heaves brightly, and remains
Rolled o'er the peak of the far Rhætian hill,
As Day and Night contending were, until
Nature reclaimed her order — gently flows
The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues instil
The odorous purple of a new-born rose,
Which streams upon her stream, and glassed within it glows,

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

XXIX

Filled with the face of heaven, which, from afar,
Comes down upon the waters¹ all its hues,
From the rich sunset to the rising star,
Their magical variety diffuse
And now they change—a paler shadow strews
Its mantle o'er the mountains, parting Day
Dies like the Dolphin, whom each pang imbues
With a new colour as it gasps away—
The last still loveliest, till—'tis gone—and all is gray



XLII

ITALIA¹ oh, Italia¹ thou who hast
The fatal gift of Beauty, which became
A funeral dower of present woes and past—
On thy sweet brow is sorrow ploughed by shame,
And annals graved in characters of flame
Oh, God¹ that thou wert in thy nakedness
Less lovely or more powerful, and couldst claim
Thy right, and awe the robbers back, who press
To shed thy blood, and drink the tears of thy distress;

XLIII

Then might'st thou more appal—or, less desired,
Be homely and be peaceful, undeplored
For thy destructive charms; then, still untired,
Would not be seen the armed torrents poured

CANTO THE FOURTH

Down the deep Alps; nor would the hostile horde
Of many-nationed spoilers from the Po
Quaff blood and water; nor the stranger's sword
Be thy sad weapon of defence, and so,
Victor or vanquished, thou the slave of friend or foe.

XLIV

Wandering in youth, I traced the path of him,
The Roman friend of Rome's least-mortal mind,
The friend of Tully as my bark did skim
The bright blue waters with a fanning wind,
Came Megara before me, and behind
Ægina lay—Piræus on the right,
And Corinth on the left, I lay reclined
Along the prow, and saw all these unite
In ruin—even as he had seen the desolate sight;

XLV

For Time hath not rebuilt them, but upreared
Barbaric dwellings on their shattered site,
Which only make more mourned and more endeared
The few last rays of their far-scattered light,
And the crushed relics of their vanished might.
The Roman saw these tombs in his own age,
These sepulchres of cities, which excite
Sad wonder, and his yet surviving page
The moral lesson bears, drawn from such pilgrimage.

XLVI

That page is now before me, and on mine
His Country's ruin added to the mass
Of perished states he mourned in their decline,
And I in desolation all that *was*

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Of then destruction *is*; and now, alas!
Rome—Rome imperial, bows her to the storm,
In the same dust and blackness, and we pass
The skeleton of her Titanic form,
Wrecks of another world, whose ashes still are warm.



XLVIII

BUT Arno wins us to the fair white walls,
Where the Etrurian Athens claims and keeps
A softer feeling for her fairy halls
Girt by her theatre of hills, she reaps
Her corn, and wine, and oil—and Plenty leaps
To laughing life, with her redundant Horn
Along the banks where smiling Arno sweeps
Was modern Luxury of Commerce born,
And buried Learning rose, redeemed to a new Morn



LIV

IN Santa Croce's holy precincts lie
Ashes which make it holier, dust which is
Even in itself an immortality,
Though there were nothing save the past, and this,

CANTO THE FOURTH

The partake of those sublimities
Which have relapsed to chaos:—here repose
Angelo's, Alfieri's bones,—and his,
The starry Galileo, with his woes,
Here Machiavelli's earth returned to whence it rose.

LV

These are four minds, which, like the elements,
Might furnish forth creation —Italy!
Time, which hath wronged thee with ten thousand rents
Of thine imperial garment, shall deny
And hath denied, to every other sky,
Spirits which soar from ruin —thy Decay
Is still impregnate with divinity,
Which gilds it with revivifying ray,
Such as the great of yore, Canova is to-day.

LVI

But where repose the all Etruscan three—
Dante, and Petrarch, and, scarce less than they,
The Bard of Prose, creative Spirit! he
Of the Hundred Tales of Love—where did they lay
Their bones, distinguished from our common clay
In death as life? Are they resolved to dust,
And have their Country's Marbles nought to say?
Could not her quarries furnish forth one bust?
Did they not to her breast their filial earth entrust?

LVII

Ungrateful Florence! Dante sleeps afar,
Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding shore:
Thy factions, in their worse than civil war,
Proscribed the Bard whose name for evermore

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Their children's children would in vain adore
With the remorse of ages; and the crown
Which Petrarch's laureate brow supremely wore,
Upon a far and foreign soil had grown—
His life, his Fame, —his Grave, though rifled—not thine own

LVIII

Boccaccio to his parent earth bequeathed
His dust, —and lies it not her Great among,
With many a sweet and solemn requiem breathed
O'er him who formed the Tuscan's siren tongue?
That music in itself, whose sounds are song,
The poetry of speech? No, —even his tomb
Uptorn, must bear the hyæna bigots' wrong,
No more amidst the meaner dead find room,
Nor claim a passing sigh, because it told for *whom*!



LXI

THERE be more things to greet the heart and eyes
In Arno's dome of Art's most princely shrine,
Where Sculpture with her rainbow sister vies,
There be more marvels yet—but not for mine;
For I have been accustomed to entwine
My thoughts with Nature, rather, in the fields,
Than Art in galleries. though a work divine
Calls for my Spirit's homage, yet it yields
Less than it feels, because the weapon which it wields

CANTO THE FOURTH

LXII

Is of another temper, and I roam
By Thrasimene's lake; in the defiles
Fatal to Roman rashness, more at home;
For there the Carthaginian's warlike wiles
Come back before me, as his skill beguiles
The host between the mountains and the shore,
Where Courage falls in her despairing files,
And torrents, swoll'n to rivers with their gore,
Reek through the sultry plain, with legions scattered o'er,

LXIII

Like to a forest felled by mountain winds.
And such the storm of battle on this day,
And such the frenzy, whose convulsion blinds
To all save Carnage, that, beneath the fray,
An Earthquake reeled unheededly away!
None felt stern Nature rocking at his feet,
And yawning forth a grave for those who lay
Upon their bucklers for a winding sheet—
Such is the absorbing hate when warring nations meet!

LXIV

The Earth to them was as a rolling bark
Which bore them to Eternity—they saw
The Ocean round, but had no time to mark
The motions of their vessel; Nature's law,
In them suspended, recked not of the awe
Which reigns when mountains tremble, and the birds
Plunge in the clouds for refuge, and withdraw
From their down-toppling nests; and bellowing herds
Stumble o'er heaving plains—and Man's dread hath no words.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

LXV

Far other scene is Thrasimene now,
Her lake a sheet of silver, and her plain
Rent by no ravage save the gentle plough;
Her agéd trees rise thick as once the slain
Lay where their roots are, but a brook hath ta'en—
A little rill of scanty stream and bed—
A name of blood from that day's sanguine rain,
And Sanguinetto tells ye where the dead
Made the earth wet, and turned the unwilling waters red



LXXVIII

O H, Rome! my Country! City of the Soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
Lone Mother of dead Empires! and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery
What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
The cypress—hear the owl—and plod your way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples—Ye!
Whose agonies are evils of a day—
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

LXXIX

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe,
An empty urn within her withered hands,
Whose holy dust was scattered long ago,

CANTO THE FOURTH

The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers dost thou flow,
Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

LXXX

The Goth, the Christian—Time—War—Flood, and Fire,
Have dealt upon the seven-hilled City's pride;
She saw her glories star by star expire,
And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride,
Where the car climbed the Capitol, far and wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a site —
Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, "here was, or is," where all is doubly night?

LXXXI

The double night, of ages and of her,
Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt and wrap
All round us; we but feel our way to err.
The Ocean hath his chart, the Stars their map,
And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap;
But Rome is as the desert—where we steer
Stumbling o'er recollections, now we clap
Our hands, and cry "Eureka!" "it is clear"—
When but some false Mirage of ruin rises near.

LXXXII

Alas! the lofty city! and, alas,
The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass
The Conqueror's sword in bearing fame away!

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
And Livy's pictured page!—but these shall be
Her resurrection, all beside—decay.
Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see
That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was free!

LXXXIII

Oh, thou, whose chariot rolled on Fortune's wheel,
Triumphant Sylla! Thou, who didst subdue
Thy country's foes ere thou wouldst pause to feel
The wrath of thy own wrongs, or reap the due
Of hoarded vengeance till thine Eagles flew
O'er prostrate Asia,—thou, who with thy frown
Annihilated senates,—Roman, too,
With all thy vices, for thou didst lay down
With an atoning smile a more than earthly crown,

LXXXIV

Thy dictatorial wreath,—couldst thou divine
To what would one day dwindle that which made
Thee more than mortal? and that so supine,
By aught than Romans Rome should thus be laid?—
She who was named Eternal, and arrayed
Her warriors but to conquer—she who veiled
Earth with her haughty shadow, and displayed,
Until the o'er-canopied horizon failed,
Her rushing wings—Oh! she who was Almighty hailed!

LXXXV

Sylla was first of victors, but our own,
The sagest of usurpers, Cromwell!—he
Too swept off senates while he hewed the throne
Down to a block—immortal rebel! See

CANTO THE FOURTH

What crimes it costs to be a moment free,
And famous through all ages ! but beneath
His fate the moral lurks of destiny;
His day of double victory and death
Beheld him win two realms, and, happier, yield his breath.

LXXXVI

The third of the same Moon whose former course
Had all but crowned him, on the selfsame day
Deposed him gently from his throne of force,
And laid him with the Earth's preceding clay.
And showed not Fortune thus how fame and sway,
And all we deem delightful, and consume
Our souls to compass through each arduous way,
Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb ?
Were they but so in Man's, how different were his doom !

LXXXVII

And thou, dread Statue ! yet existent in
The austere form of naked majesty—
Thou who beheldest, 'mid the assassins' din,
At thy bathed base the bloody Cæsar lie,
Folding his robe in dying dignity—
An offering to thine altar from the Queen
Of gods and men, great Nemesis ! did he die,
And thou, too, perish, Pompey ? have ye been
Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a scene ?

LXXXVIII

And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse of Rome !
She-wolf ! whose brazen-imaged dugs impart
The milk of conquest yet within the dome
Where, as a monument of antique art,

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Thou standest—Mother of the mighty heart,
Which the great Founder sucked from thy wild teat,
Scorched by the Roman Jove's ethereal dart,
And thy limbs black with lightning—dost thou yet
Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond charge forget?

LXXXIX

Thou dost;—but all thy foster-babes are dead—
The men of iron—and the World hath reared
Cities from out their sepulchres men bled
In imitation of the things they feared,
And fought and conquered, and the same course steered,
At apish distance, but as yet none have,
Nor could the same supremacy have neared,
Save one vain Man, who is not in the grave—
But, vanquished by himself, to his own slaves a slave—

XC

The fool of false dominion—and a kind
Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old
With steps unequal; for the Roman's mind
Was modelled in a less terrestrial mould,
With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold,
And an immortal instinct which redeemed
The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold—
Alcides with the distaff now he seemed
At Cleopatra's feet,—and now himself he beamed,

XCI

And came—and saw—and conquered! But the man
Who would have tamed his Eagles down to flee,
Like a trained falcon, in the Gallic van,
Which he, in sooth, long led to Victory,

CANTO THE FOURTH

With a deaf heart which never seemed to be
A listener to itself, was strangely framed;
With but one weakest weakness—Vanity—
Coquettish in ambition—still he aimed—
At what? can he avouch, or answer what he claimed?

XCII

And would be all or nothing—nor could wait
For the sure grave to level him, few years
Had fixed him with the Cæsars in his fate,
On whom we tread. For *this* the conqueror rears
The Arch of Triumph! and for this the tears
And blood of earth flow on as they have flowed,
An universal Deluge, which appears
Without an Ark for wretched Man's abode,
And ebbs but to reflow!—Renew thy rainbow, God!

XCIII

What from this barren being do we reap?
Our senses narrow, and our reason frail,
Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,
And all things weighed in Custom's falsest scale;
Opinion an Omnipotence,—whose veil
Mantles the earth with darkness, until right
And wrong are accidents, and Men grow pale
Lest their own judgments should become too bright,
And their free thoughts be crimes, and Earth have too much light.

XCIV

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,
Rotting from sire to son, and age to age,
Proud of their trampled nature, and so die,
Bequeathing their hereditary rage

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

To the new race of inborn slaves, who wage
War for their chains, and rather than be free,
Bleed gladiator-like, and still engage
Within the same Arena where they see
Their fellows fall before, like leaves of the same tree.

XCV

I speak not of men's creeds—they rest between
Man and his Maker—but of things allowed,
Averred, and known, and daily, hourly seen—
The yoke that is upon us doubly bowed,
And the intent of Tyranny avowed,
The edict of Earth's rulers, who are grown
The apes of him who humbled once the proud,
And shook them from their slumbers on the throne,
Too glorious, were this all his mighty arm had done.

XCVI

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquered be,
And Freedom find no champion and no child,
Such as Columbia saw arise when she
Sprung forth a Pallas, armed and undefiled?
Or must such minds be nourished in the wild,
Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the roar
Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled
On infant Washington? Has Earth no more
Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

XCVII

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,
And fatal have her Saturnalia been
To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime,
Because the deadly days which we have seen,

CANTO THE FOURTH

And vile Ambition, that built up between
Man and his hopes an adamantine wall,
And the base pageant last upon the scene,
Are grown the pretext for the eternal thrall
Which nips Life's tree, and dooms man's worst—his second fall.

XCVIII

Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind!
Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind,
Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
Chopped by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
But the sap lasts,—and still the seed we find
Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;
So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth.



XCIX

THERE is a stern round tower of other days,
Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,
Such as an army's baffled strength delays,
Standing with half its battlements alone,
And with two thousand years of ivy grown,
The garland of Eternity, where wave
The green leaves over all by Time o'erthrown;—
What was this tower of strength? within its cave
What treasure lay so locked, so hid?—A woman's grave.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

C

But who was she, the Lady of the dead,
Tombed in a palace? Was she chaste and fair?
Worthy a king's—or more—a Roman's bed?
What race of Chiefs and Heroes did she bear?
What daughter of her beauties was the heir?
How lived—how loved—how died she? Was she not
So honoured—and conspicuously there,
Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,
Placed to commemorate a more than mortal lot?

CI

Was she as those who love their lords, or they
Who love the lords of others? such have been
Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say
Was she a matron of Cornelia's mien,
Or the light air of Egypt's graceful Queen,
Profuse of joy—or 'gainst it did she war,
Inveterate in virtue? Did she lean
To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar
Love from amongst her griefs?—for such the affections are.

CII

Perchance she died in youth—it may be, bowed
With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb
That weighed upon her gentle dust: a cloud
Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom
In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
Heaven gives its favourites—early death, yet shed
A sunset charm around her, and illume
With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,
Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.

CANTO THE FOURTH

CIII

Perchance she died in age—surviving all,
Charms—kindred—children—with the silver gray
On her long tresses, which might yet recall,
It may be, still a something of the day
When they were braided, and her proud array
And lovely form were envied, praised, and eyed
By Rome—But whither would Conjecture stray?
Thus much alone we know—Metella died,
The wealthiest Roman's wife Behold his love or pride!

CIV

I know not why—but standing thus by thee
It seems as if I had thine inmate known,
Thou Tomb! and other days come back on me
With recollected music, though the tone
Is changed and solemn, like the cloudy groan
Of dying thunder on the distant wind;
Yet, could I seat me by this ivied stone
Till I had bodied forth the heated mind,
Forms from the floating wreck which Ruin leaves behind;

CV

And from the planks, far shattered o'er the rocks,
Built me a little bark of hope, once more
To battle with the Ocean and the shocks
Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless roar
Which rushes on the solitary shore
Where all lies foundered that was ever dear
But could I gather from the wave-worn store
Enough for my rude boat,—where should I steer?
There woos no home, nor hope, nor life, save what is here.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

CVI

Then let the Winds howl on ! their harmony
Shall henceforth be my music, and the Night
The sound shall temper with the owlets' cry,
As I now hear them, in the fading light
Dim o'er the bird of darkness' native site,
Answering each other on the Palatine,
With their large eyes, all glistening gray and bright,
And sailing pinions. — Upon such a shrine
What are our petty griefs ? — let me not number mine.



CX

TULLY was not so eloquent as thou,
Thou nameless column with the buried base !
What are the laurels of the Cæsar's brow ?
Crown me with ivy from his dwelling-place
Whose arch or pillar meets me in the face,
Titus or Trajan's ? No — 'tis that of Time
Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace
Scoffing ; and apostolic statues climb
To crush the Imperial urn, whose ashes slept sublime,

CXI

Buried in air, the deep blue sky of Rome,
And looking to the stars they had contained
A Spirit which with these would find a home,
The last of those who o'er the whole earth reigned,

CANTO THE FOURTH

The Roman globe—for, after, none sustained,
But yielded back his conquests—he was more
Than a mere Alexander, and, unstained
With household blood and wine, serenely wore
His sovereign virtues—still we Trajan's name adore.

CXII

Where is the rock of Triumph, the high place
Where Rome embraced her heroes?—where the steep
Tarpeian?—fittest goal of Treason's race,
The Promontory whence the Traitor's Leap
Cured all ambition? Did the conquerors heap
Their spoils here? Yes; and in yon field below,
A thousand years of silenced factions sleep—
The Forum, where the immortal accents glow,
And still the eloquent air breathes—burns with Cicero!



CXV

EGERIA! sweet creation of some heart
Which found no mortal resting-place so fair
As thine ideal breast, whate'er thou art
Or wert,—a young Aurora of the air,
The nympholepsy of some fond despair—
Or—it might be—a Beauty of the earth,
Who found a more than common Votary there
Too much adoring—whatsoe'er thy birth,
Thou wert a beautiful Thought, and softly bodied forth.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

CXVI

The mosses of thy Fountain still are sprinkled
With thine Elysian water-drops; the face
Of thy cave-guarded Spring, with years unwrinkled,
Reflects the meek-eyed Genius of the place,
Whose green, wild margin now no more erase
Art's works; nor must the delicate waters sleep
Prisoned in marble—bubbling from the base
Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap
The rill runs o'er—and, round, fern, flowers, and ivy, creep

CXVII

Fantastically tangled: the green hills
Are clothed with early blossoms—through the grass
The quick-eyed lizard rustles—and the bills
Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye pass,
Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,
Implore the pausing step, and with their dyes
Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass,
The sweetness of the Violet's deep blue eyes,
Kissed by the breath of heaven, seems coloured by its skies.

CXVIII

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted cover,
Egeria! thy all heavenly bosom beating
For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover;
The purple Midnight veiled that mystic meeting
With her most starry canopy—and seating
Thyself by thine adorer, what befel?
This cave was surely shaped out for the greeting
Of an enamoured Goddess, and the cell
Haunted by holy Love—the earliest Oracle!

CANTO THE FOURTH

CXIX

And didst thou not, thy breast to his replying,
Blend a celestial with a human heart;
And Love, which dies as it was born, in sighing,
Share with immortal transports? could thine art
Make them indeed immortal, and impart
The purity of Heaven to earthly joys,
Expel the venom and not blunt the dart—
The dull satiety which all destroys—
And root from out the soul the deadly weed which cloy?

CXX

Alas! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert! whence arise
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,
Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes,
Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies,
And trees whose gums are poison; such the plants
Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies
O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly pants
For some celestial fruit forbidden to our wants.

CXXI

Oh, Love! no habitant of earth thou art—
An unseen Seraph, we believe in thee,—
A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart,—
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be;
The mind hath made thee, as it peopled Heaven,
Even with its own desiring phantasy,
And to a thought such shape and image given,
As haunts the unquenched soul—parched—wearied—
 wrung—and riven

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

CXXII

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,
And fevers into false creation —where,
Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seized?
In him alone Can Nature show so fair?
Where are the charms and virtues which we dare
Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men,
The unreach'd Paradise of our despair,
Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen,
And overpowers the page where it would bloom again?



CXXX

O H, Time! the Beautifier of the dead,
Adorner of the ruin—Comforter
And only Healer when the heart hath bled,—
Time! the Corrector where our judgments err,
The test of Truth, Love—sole philosopher,
For all beside are sophists—from thy thrift,
Which never loses though it doth defer—
Time, the Avenger! unto thee I lift
My hands, and eyes, and heart, and crave of thee a gift

CXXXI

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made a shrine
And temple more divinely desolate—
Among thy mightier offerings here are mine,
Ruins of years—though few, yet full of fate —

CANTO THE FOURTH

If thou hast ever seen me too elate,
Hear me not, but if calmly I have borne
Good, and reserved my pride against the hate
Which shall not overwhelm me, let me not have worn
This iron in my soul in vain—shall *they* not mourn?

CXXXII

And Thou, who never yet of human wrong
Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!
Here, where the ancient paid thee homage long—
Thou, who didst call the Furies from the abyss,
And round Orestes bade them howl and hiss
For that unnatural retribution—just,
Had it but been from hands less near—in this
Thy former realm, I call thee from the dust!
Dost thou not hear my heart?—Awake! thou shalt, and must.

CXXXIII

It is not that I may not have incurred,
For my ancestral faults or mine, the wound
I bleed withal, and, had it been conferred
With a just weapon, it had flowed unbound;
But now my blood shall not sink in the ground—
To thee I do devote it—*Thou* shalt take
The vengeance, which shall yet besought and found—
Which if *I* have not taken for the sake—
But let that pass—I sleep—but Thou shalt yet awake.

CXXXIV

And if my voice break forth, 'tis not that now
I shrink from what is suffered let him speak
Who hath beheld decline upon my brow,
Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it weak,

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

But in this page a record will I seek
Not in the air shall these my words disperse,
Though I be ashes, a far hour shall wreak
The deep prophetic fulness of this verse,
And pile on human heads the mountain of my curse!

CXXXV

That curse shall be Forgiveness — Have I not —
Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it, Heaven! —
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
Have I not suffered things to be forgiven?
Have I not had my brain seared, my heart riven,
Hopes sapped, name blighted, Life's life lied away!
And only not to desperation driven,
Because not altogether of such clay
As rots into the souls of those whom I survey.

CXXXVI

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
Have I not seen what human things could do?
From the loud roar of foaming calumny
To the small whisper of the as paltry few —
And subtler venom of the reptile crew,
The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
Learning to lie with silence, would *seem* true —
And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,
Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy

CXXXVII

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain.
My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
And my frame perish even in conquering pain;
But there is that within me which shall tire

CANTO THE FOURTH

Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire;
Something unearthly, which they deem not of,
Like the remembered tone of a mute lyre,
Shall on their softened spirits sink, and move
In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love.

CXXXVIII

The seal is set. — Now welcome, thou dread Power
Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which here
Walk'st in the shadow of the midnight hour
With a deep awe, yet all distinct from fear;
Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear
Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene
Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear
That we become a part of what has been,
And grow upon the spot—all-seeing but unseen

CXXXIX

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
In murmured pity, or loud-roared applause,
As man was slaughtered by his fellow man.
And wherefore slaughtered? wherefore, but because
Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
And the imperial pleasure. — Wherefore not?
What matters where we fall to fill the maws
Of worms—on battle-plains or listed spot?
Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

CXL

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his drooped head sinks gradually low—

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower ; and now
The arena swims around him—he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who won.

CXLI

He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
Were with his heart—and that was far away ,
He recked not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay—
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,
Butchered to make a Roman holiday—
All this rushed with his blood—Shall he expire
And unavenged?—Arise ! ye Goths, and glut your ire !

CXLII

But here, where Murder breathed her bloody steam;—
And here, where buzzing nations choked the ways,
And roared or murmured like a mountain stream
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman million's blame or praise
Was Death or Life, the playthings of a crowd,
My voice sounds much—and fall the stars' faint rays
On the arena void—seats crushed—walls bowed—
And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely loud.

CXLIII

A Ruin—yet what Ruin ! from its mass
Walls—palaces—half-cities, have been reared,
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have appeared

CANTO THE FOURTH

Hath it indeed been plundered, or but cleared?
Alas! developed, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric's form is neared
It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all—years—man—have reft away

CXLIV

But when the rising moon begins to climb
Its topmost arch, and gently pauses there—
When the stars twinkle through the loops of Time,
And the low night-breeze waves along the air
The garland-forest, which the gray walls wear,
Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head—
When the light shines serene but doth not glare—
Then in this magic circle raise the dead,—
Heroes have trod this spot—'tis on their dust ye tread

CXLV

“While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand
“When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall,
“And when Rome falls—the World.” From our own land
Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall
In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
Ancient, and these three mortal things are still
On their foundations, and unaltered all—
Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill—
The World, the same wide den—of thieves, or what ye will.



CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

CLXXV

BUT I forget.—My Pilgrim's shrine is won,
And he and I must part,—so let it be,—
His task and mine alike are nearly done;
Yet once more let us look upon the Sea,
The Midland Ocean breaks on him and me,
And from the Alban Mount we now behold
Our friend of youth, that Ocean, which when we
Beheld it last by Calpe's rock unfold
Those waves, we followed on till the dark Euxine rolled

CLXXVI

Upon the blue Symplegades long years—
Long, though not very many, since have done
Their work on both, some suffering and some tears
Have left us nearly where we had begun
Yet not in vain our mortal race hath run—
We have had our reward—and it is here,
That we can yet feel gladdened by the Sun,
And reap from Earth, Sea, joy almost as dear
As if there were no Man to trouble what is clear

CLXXVII

Oh! that the Desert were my dwelling-place,
With one fair Spirit for my minister,
That I might all forget the human race,
And, hating no one, love but only her!
Ye elements!—in whose ennobling stir
I feel myself exalted—Can ye not
Accord me such a Being? Do I err
In deeming such inhabit many a spot?
Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot

CANTO THE FOURTH

CLXXVIII

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and Music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express—yet cannot all conceal.

CLXXIX

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore,—upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan—
Without a grave—unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown.

CLXXX

His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy fields
Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise
And shake him from thee, the vile strength he wields
For Earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies—
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to Earth —there let him lay

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

CLXXXI

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
And Monarchs tremble in their Capitals,
The oak Leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of Lord of thee, and Arbiter of War—
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's pride, or spoils of Trafalgar

CLXXXII

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—
Assyria—Greece—Rome—Carthage—what are they?
Thy waters washed them power while they were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage, their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts —not so thou,
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play,
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow—
Such as Creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now

CLXXXIII

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,
Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm—
Icing the Pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving—boundless, endless, and sublime—
The image of Eternity—the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made—each zone
Obeys thee—thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

CANTO THE FOURTH

CLXXXIV

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward. from a boy
I wantoned with thy breakers—they to me
Were a delight, and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror—'twas a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a Child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here.

CLXXXV

My task is done—my song hath ceased—my theme
Has died into an echo; it is fit
The spell should break of this protracted dream
The torch shall be extinguished which hath lit
My midnight lamp—and what is writ, is writ, —
Would it were worthier! but I am not now
That which I have been—and my visions flit
Less palpably before me—and the glow
Which in my Spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low.

CLXXXVI

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been—
A sound which makes us linger;—yet—farewell!
Ye! who have traced the Pilgrim to the scene
Which is his last—if in your memories dwell
A thought which once was his—if on ye swell
A single recollection—not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon, and scallop-shell;
Farewell! with *him* alone may rest the pain,
If such there were—with *you*, the Moral of his Strain.

1817—18.

TO THOMAS MOORE

I

MY boat is on the shore,
And my bark is on the sea,
It, before I go, Tom Moore,
Here's a double health to thee!

2

Here's a sigh to those who love me,
And a smile to those who hate,
And, whatever sky's above me,
Here's a heart for every fate

3

Though the Ocean roar around me,
Yet it still shall bear me on;
Though a desert should surround me,
It hath springs that may be won

4

Here't the last drop in the well,
As I gasped upon the brink,
When my fainting spirit fell,
Tis to thee that I would drink.

5

With that water, as this wine,
The libation I would pour
Would be—peace with thine and mine,
And a health to thee, Tom Moore

April 1816—July 1817

TO THOMAS MOORE

WHAT are you doing now,
Oh Thomas Moore?

What are you doing now,
Oh Thomas Moore?

Sighing or suing now,
Rhyming or wooing now,
Billing or cooing now,
Which, Thomas Moore?

But the Carnival's coming,
Oh Thomas Moore!

The Carnival's coming,
Oh Thomas Moore!

Masking and humming,
Fifing and drumming,
Guitarring and strumming,
Oh Thomas Moore!

December 26, 1816

SO WE'LL GO NO MORE A-ROVING

1

SO we'll go no more a-roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright

2

For the sword outwears its sheath,
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And Love itself have rest.

3

Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a-roving
By the light of the moon

February 28, 1817

BEPPPO
A VENETIAN STORY

ROSALIND. Farewell, Monsieur Traveller. Look, you lisp, and wear strange suits: disable all the benefits of your own country; be out of love with your Nativity, and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are, or I will scarce think you have swam in a *Gondola*.

As You Like It, Act IV. Sc 1.

Annotation of the Commentators.

That is, *been at Venice*, which was much visited by the young English gentlemen of those times, and was *then* what *Paris* is *now*—the seat of all dissoluteness.

S.A.

BEPPO

I

'TIS known, at least it should be, that throughout
All countries of the Catholic persuasion,
Some weeks before Shrove Tuesday comes about,
The People take their fill of recreation,
And buy repentance, ere they grow devout,
However high their rank, or low their station,
With fiddling, feasting, dancing, drinking, masquing,
And other things which may be had for asking

II

The moment night with dusky mantle covers
The skies (and the more duskily the better),
The Time less liked by husbands than by lovers
Begins, and Prudery flings aside her fetter,
And Gaiety on restless tiptoe hovers,
Giggling with all the gallants who beset her,
And there are songs and quavers, roaring, humming,
Guitars, and every other sort of strumming

III

And there are dresses splendid, but fantastical,
Masks of all times and nations, Turks and Jews,
And harlequins and clowns, with feats gymnastical,
Greeks, Romans, Yankee-doodles, and Hindoos,
All kinds of dress, except the ecclesiastical,
All people, as their fancies hit, may choose,
But no one in these parts may quiz the Clergy, —
Therefore take heed, ye Freethinkers! I charge ye

IV

You'd better walk about begirt with briars,
Instead of coat and small clothes, than put on

BEPPO

A single stitch reflecting upon friars,
Although you swore it only was in fun;
They'd haul you o'er the coals, and stir the fires
Of Phlegethon with every mother's son,
Nor say one mass to cool the cauldron's bubble
That boiled your bones, unless you paid them double.

V

But saving this, you may put on whate'er
You like by way of doublet, cape, or cloak,
Such as in Monmouth-street, or in Rag Fair,
Would rig you out in seriousness or joke;
And even in Italy such places are,
With prettier name in softer accents spoke,
For, bating Covent Garden, I can hit on
No place that's called "Piazza" in Great Britain.

VI

This feast is named the Carnival, which being
Interpreted, implies "farewell to flesh"
So called, because the name and thing agreeing,
Through Lent they live on fish both salt and fresh.
But why they usher Lent with so much glee in,
Is more than I can tell, although I guess
'Tis as we take a glass with friends at parting,
In the Stage-Coach or Packet, just at starting.

VII

And thus they bid farewell to carnal dishes,
And solid meats, and highly spiced ragouts,
To live for forty days on ill-dressed fishes,
Because they have no sauces to their stews,
A thing which causes many "poohs" and "pishes"
And several oaths (which would not suit the Muse),

BEPPO

rom travellers accustomed from a boy
eat their salmon, at the least, with soy;

VIII

therefore humbly I would recommend
“The curious in fish-sauce,” before they cross
the sea, to bid their cook, or wife, or friend,
Walk or ride to the Strand, and buy in gross
Or if set out beforehand, these may send
By any means least liable to loss),
etchup, Soy, Chili-vinegar, and Harvey,
by the Lord! a Lent will wellnigh starve ye,

IX

That is to say, if your religion's Roman,
And you at Rome would do as Romans do,
According to the proverb,—although no man,
If foreign, is obliged to fast, and you,
Protestant, or sickly, or a woman,
Would rather dine in sin on a ragout—
Dine and be d—d! I don't mean to be coarse,
But that's the penalty, to say no worse.

X

Of all the places where the Carnival
Was most facetious in the days of yore,
For dance, and song, and serenade, and ball,
And Masque, and Mime, and Mystery, and more
Than I have time to tell now, or at all,
Venice the bell from every city bore,—
And at the moment when I fix my story,
That sea-born city was in all her glory

BEPPPO

XI

They've pretty faces yet, those same Venetians,
Black eyes, arched brows, and sweet expressions still;
Such as of old were copied from the Grecians,
In ancient arts by moderns mimicked ill;
And like so many Venuses of Titian's
(The best's at Florence—see it, if ye will,)
They look when leaning over the balcony,
Or stepped from out a picture by Giorgione,

XII

Whose tints are Truth and Beauty at their best;
And when you to Manfrini's palace go,
That picture (howsoever fine the rest)
Is loveliest to my mind of all the show,
It may perhaps be also to *your* zest,
And that's the cause I rhyme upon it so.
'Tis but a portrait of his Son, and Wife,
And self, but *such* a Woman! Love in Life!

XIII

Love in full life and length, not love ideal,
No, nor ideal beauty, that fine name,
But something better still, so very real,
That the sweet Model must have been the same;
A thing that you would purchase, beg, or steal,
Wer't not impossible, besides a shame:
The face recalls some face, as 'twere with pain,
You once have seen, but ne'er will see again;

XIV

One of those forms which flit by us, when we
Are young, and fix our eyes on every face;

BEPPO

And, oh! the Loveliness at times we see
In momentary gliding, the soft grace,
The Youth, the Bloom, the Beauty which agree,
In many a nameless being we retrace,
Whose course and home we knew not, nor shall know,
Like the lost Pleiad seen no more below.

XV

I said that like a picture by Giorgione
Venetian women were, and so they *are*,
Particularly seen from a balcony,
(For beauty's sometimes best set off afar)
And there, just like a heroine of Goldoni,
They peep from out the blind, or o'er the bar,
And truth to say, they're mostly very pretty,
And rather like to show it, more's the pity!

XVI

For glances beget ogles, ogles sighs,
Sighs wishes, wishes words, and words a letter,
Which flies on wings of light-heeled Mercuries,
Who do such things because they know no better,
And then, God knows what mischief may arise,
When Love links two young people in one fetter,
Vile assignations, and adulterous beds,
Elopements, broken vows, and hearts, and heads.

XVII

Shakespeare described the sex in Desdemona
As very fair, but yet suspect in fame,
And to this day from Venice to Verona
Such matters may be probably the same,
Except that since those times was never known a
Husband whom mere suspicion could inflame

BEPPO

To suffocate a wife no more than twenty,
Because she had a "Cavalier Servente."

XVIII

Their jealousy (if they are ever jealous)
Is of a fair complexion altogether,
Not like that sooty devil of Othello's
Which smothers women in a bed of feather,
But worthier of these much more jolly fellows,
When weary of the matrimonial tether
His head for such a wife no mortal bothers,
But takes at once another, or another's.

XIX

Didst ever see a Gondola? For fear
You should not, I'll describe it you exactly
'Tis a long covered boat that's common here,
Carved at the prow, built lightly, but compactly,
Rowed by two rowers, each called "Gondolier,"
It glides along the water looking blackly,
Just like a coffin clapt in a canoe,
Where none can make out what you say or do.

XX

And up and down the long canals they go,
And under the Rialto shoot along,
By night and day, all paces, swift or slow,
And round the theatres, a sable throng,
They wait in their dusk livery of woe, —
But not to them do woeful things belong,
For sometimes they contain a deal of fun,
Like mourning coaches when the funeral's done.

BEPPO

XXI

But to my story. — 'Twas some years ago,
It may be thirty, forty, more or less,
The Carnival was at its height, and so
Were all kinds of buffoonery and dress;
A certain lady went to see the show,
Her real name I know not, nor can guess,
And so we'll call her Laura, if you please,
Because it slips into my verse with ease

XXII

She was not old, nor young, nor at the years
Which certain people call a "*certain age*,"
Which yet the most uncertain age appears,
Because I never heard, nor could engage
A person yet by prayers, or bribes, or tears,
To name, define by speech, or write on page,
The period meant precisely by that word, —
Which surely is exceedingly absurd

XXIII

Laura was blooming still, had made the best
Of Time, and Time returned the compliment,
And treated her genteelly, so that, dressed,
She looked extremely well where'er she went,
A pretty woman is a welcome guest,
And Laura's brow a frown had rarely bent,
Indeed, she shone all smiles, and seemed to flatter
Mankind with her black eyes for looking at her

XXIV

She was a married woman; 'tis convenient,
Because in Christian countries 'tis a rule

BEPPO

To view their little slips with eyes more lenient,
Whereas if single ladies play the fool,
(Unless within the period intervenient
A well-timed wedding makes the scandal cool)
I don't know how they ever can get over it,
Except they manage never to discover it.

XXV

Her husband sailed upon the Adriatic,
And made some voyages, too, in other seas,
And when he lay in Quarantine for pratique
(A forty days' precaution 'gainst disease),
His wife would mount, at times, her highest attic,
For thence she could discern the ship with ease.
He was a merchant trading to Aleppo,
His name Giuseppe, called more briefly, Beppo.

XXVI

He was a man as dusky as a Spaniard,
Sunburnt with travel, yet a portly figure;
Though coloured, as it were, within a tanyard,
He was a person both of sense and vigour —
A better seaman never yet did man yard;
And she, although her manner showed no rigour,
Was deemed a woman of the strictest principle,
So much as to be thought almost invincible.

XXVII

But several years elapsed since they had met;
Some people thought the ship was lost, and some
That he had somehow blundered into debt,
And did not like the thought of steering home,
And there were several offered any bet,
Or that he would, or that he would not come,

BEPPO

For most men (till by losing rendered sager)
Will back their own opinions with a wager.

XXVIII

'Tis said that their last parting was pathetic,
As partings often are, or ought to be,
And their presentiment was quite prophetic,
That they should never more each other see,
(A sort of morbid feeling, half poetic,
Which I have known occur in two or three,)
When kneeling on the shore upon her sad knee
He left this Adriatic Ariadne

XXIX

And Laura waited long, and wept a little,
And thought of wearing weeds, as well she might,
She almost lost all appetite for victual,
And could not sleep with ease alone at night,
She deemed the window-frames and shutters brittle
Against a daring housebreaker or sprite,
And so she thought it prudent to connect her
With a vice-husband, *chiefly to protect her*

XXX

She chose, (and what is there they will not choose,
If only you will but oppose their choice?)
Till Beppo should return from his long cruise,
And bid once more her faithful heart rejoice,
A man some women like, and yet abuse—
A Coxcomb was he by the public voice,
A Count of wealth, they said, as well as quality,
And in his pleasures of great liberality.

BEPPO

XXXI

And then he was a Count, and then he knew
Music, and dancing, fiddling, French and Tuscan;
The last not easy, be it known to you,
For few Italians speak the right Etruscan.
He was a critic upon operas, too,
And knew all niceties of sock and buskin;
And no Venetian audience could endure a
Song, scene, or air, when he cried "seccatura!"

XXXII

His "bravo" was decisive, for that sound
Hushed "Academie" sighed in silent awe;
The fiddlers trembled as he looked around,
For fear of some false note's detected flaw;
The "Prima Donna's" tuneful heart would bound,
Dreading the deep damnation of his "Bah!"
Soprano, Basso, even the Contra-Alto,
Wished him five fathom under the Rialto.

XXXIII

He patronised the Improvisatori,
Nay, could himself extemporise some stanzas,
Wrote rhymes, sang songs, could also tell a story,
Sold pictures, and was skilful in the dance as
Italians can be, though in this their glory
Must surely yield the palm to that which France has;
In short, he was a perfect Cavaliero
And to his very valet seemed a hero

XXXIV

Then he was faithful too, as well as amorous,
So that no sort of female could complain;

BEPPO

Although they're now and then a little clamorous,
He never put the pretty souls in pain,
His heart was one of those which most enamour us,
Wax to receive, and marble to retain
He was a lover of the good old school,
Who still become more constant as they cool

XXXV

No wonder such accomplishments should turn
A female head, however sage and steady—
With scarce a hope that Beppo could return,
In law he was almost as good as dead, he
Nor sent, nor wrote, nor showed the least concern,
And she had waited several years already
And really if a man won't let us know
That he's alive, he's *dead*—or should be so.

XXXVI

Besides, within the Alps, to every woman,
(Although, God knows, it is a grievous sin,)
'Tis, I may say, permitted to have *two* men,
I can't tell who first brought the custom in,
But "Cavalier Serventes" are quite common
And no one notices, nor cares a pin,
And we may call this (not to say the worst)
A *second* marriage which corrupts the *first*

XXXVII

The word was formerly a "Cicisbeo,"
But *that* is now grown vulgar and indecent;
The Spaniards call the person a "*Cortejo*,"
For the same mode subsists in Spain, though recent;
In short it reaches from the Po to Teio,
And may perhaps at last be o'er the sea sent:

BEPPO

But Heaven preserve Old England from such courses!
Or what becomes of damage and divorces?

XXXVIII

However, I still think, with all due deference
To the fair *single* part of the creation,
That married ladies should preserve the preference
In *tête à tête* or general conversation—
And this I say without peculiar reference
To England, France, or any other nation—
Because they know the world, and are at ease,
And being natural, naturally please.

XXXIX

'Tis true, your budding Miss is very charming,
But shy and awkward at first coming out,
So much alarmed, that she is quite alarming,
All Giggle, Blush,—half Pertness, and half Pout;
And glancing at *Mamma*, for fear there's harm in
What you, she, it, or they, may be about:
The Nursery still lisps out in all they utter—
Besides, they always smell of bread and butter.

XL

But “Cavalier Servente” is the phrase
Used in politest circles to express
This supernumerary slave, who stays
Close to the lady as a part of dress,
Her word the only law which he obeys.
His is no sinecure, as you may guess;
Coach, servants, gondola, he goes to call,
And carries fan and tippet, gloves and shawl.

BEPPO

XLI

With all its sinful doings, I must say,
That Italy's a pleasant place to me,
Who love to see the Sun shine every day,
And vines (not nailed to walls) from tree to tree
Festooned, much like the back scene of a play,
Or melodrame, which people flock to see,
When the first act is ended by a dance
In vineyards copied from the south of France.

XLII

I like on Autumn evenings to ride out,
Without being forced to bid my groom be sure
My cloak is round his middle strapped about,
Because the skies are not the most secure,
I know too that, if stopped upon my route,
Where the green alleys windingly allure,
Reeling with *grapes* red wagons choke the way,—
In England 'twould be dung, dust, or a dray

XLIII

I also like to dine on becaficas,
To see the Sun set, sure he'll rise to-morrow,
Not through a misty morning twinkling weak as
A drunken man's dead eye in maudlin sorrow,
But with all Heaven t'himself, the day will break as
Beauteous as cloudless, nor be forced to borrow
That sort of farthing candlelight which glimmers
Where reeking London's smoky cauldron simmers.

XLIV

I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,
Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,

BEPPO

And sounds as if it should be writ on satin,
With syllables which breathe of the sweet South,
And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in,
That not a single accent seems uncouth,
Like our harsh northern whistling, grunting guttural,
Which we're obliged to hiss, and spit, and sputter all.

XLV

I like the women too (forgive my folly!),
From the rich peasant cheek of ruddy bronze,
And large black eyes that flash on you a volley
Of rays that say a thousand things at once,
To the high dama's brow, more melancholy,
But clear, and with a wild and liquid glance,
Heart on her lips, and soul within her eyes,
Soft as her clime, and sunny as her skies.

XLVI

Eve of the land which still is Paradise!
Italian Beauty! didst thou not inspire
Raphael, who died in thy embrace, and vies
With all we know of Heaven, or can desire,
In what he hath bequeathed us?—in what guise,
Though flashing from the fervour of the Lyre,
Would *words* describe thy past and present glow,
While yet Canova can create below?

XLVII

“England! with all thy faults I love thee still,”
I said at Calais, and have not forgot it;
I like to speak and lucubrate my fill,
I like the government (but that is not it);
I like the freedom of the press and quill;
I like the Habeas Corpus (when we've got it);

BEPPO

I like a Parliamentary debate,
Particularly when 'tis not too late;

XLVIII

I like the taxes, when they're not too many;
I like a seacoal fire, when not too dear;
I like a beef-steak, too, as well as any;
Have no objection to a pot of beer,
I like the weather, —when it is not rainy.
That is, I like two months of every year
And so God save the Regent, Church, and King!
Which means that I like all and every thing.

XLIX

Our standing army, and disbanded seamen,
Poor's rate, Reform, my own, the nation's debt,
Our little riots, just to show we're free men,
Our trifling bankruptcies in the Gazette,
Our cloudy climate, and our chilly women,
All these I can forgive, and those forget,
And greatly venerate our recent glories,
And wish they were not owing to the Tories.

L

But to my tale of Laura, —for I find
Digression is a sin, that by degrees
Becomes exceeding tedious to my mind,
And, therefore, may the reader too displease—
The gentle reader, who may wax unkind,
And caring little for the Author's ease,
Insist on knowing what he means—a hard
And hapless situation for a Bard.

BEPPO

LI

Oh! that I had the art of easy writing
What should be easy reading! could I scale
Parnassus, where the Muses sit inditing
Those pretty poems never known to fail,
How quickly would I print (the world delighting)
A Grecian, Syrian, or Assyrian tale;
And sell you, mixed with western Sentimentalism,
Some samples of the *finest Orientalism*

LII

But I am but a nameless sort of person,
(A broken Dandy lately on my travels)
And take for rhyme, to hook my rambling verse on,
The first that Walker's Lexicon unravels,
And when I can't find that, I put a worse on,
Not caring as I ought for critics' cavils;
I've half a mind to tumble down to prose,
But verse is more in fashion—so here goes!

LIII

The Count and Laura made their new arrangement,
Which lasted, as arrangements sometimes do,
For half a dozen years without estrangement;
They had their little differences, too,
Those jealous whiffs, which never any change meant;
In such affairs there probably are few
Who have not had this pouting sort of squabble,
From sinners of high station to the rabble.

LIV

But, on the whole, they were a happy pair,
As happy as unlawful love could make them,

BEPPO

The gentleman was fond, the lady fair,
Their chains so slight, 'twas not worth while to break them
The World beheld them with indulgent air ;
The pious only wished "the Devil take them !"
He took them not; he very often waits,
And leaves old sinners to be young ones' baits.

LV

But they were young Oh ! what without our Youth
Would Love be ! What would Youth be without Love !
Youth lends its joy, and sweetness, vigour, truth,
Heart, soul, and all that seems as from above ;
But, languishing with years, it grows uncouth—
One of few things Experience don't improve,
Which is, perhaps, the reason why old fellows
Are always so preposterously jealous.

LV I

It was the Carnival, as I have said
Some six and thirty stanzas back, and, so,
Laura the usual preparations made,
Which you do when your mind's made up to go
To-night to Mrs. Boehm's masquerade,
Spectator, or partaker in the show,
The only difference known between the cases
Is—*here*, we have six weeks of "varnished faces."

LV II

Laura, when dressed, was (as I sang before)
A pretty woman as was ever seen,
Fresh as the Angel o'er a new inn door,
Or frontispiece of a new Magazine,
With all the fashions which the last month wore,
Coloured, and silver paper leaved between

BEPP0

That and the title-page, for fear the Press
Should soil with parts of speech the parts of dress.

LVIII

They went to the Ridotto, 'tis a hall
Where People dance, and sup, and dance again;
Its proper name, perhaps, were a masqued ball,
But that's of no importance to my strain,
'Tis (on a smaller scale) like our Vauxhall,
Excepting that it can't be spoilt by rain,
The company is "mixed" (the phrase I quote is
As much as saying, they're below your notice);

LIX

For a "mixed company" implies that, save
Yourself and friends, and half a hundred more,
Whom you may bow to without looking grave,
The rest are but a vulgar set, the bore
Of public places, where they basely brave
The fashionable stare of twenty score
Of well-bred persons, called "*The World*", but I,
Although I know them, really don't know why.

LX

This is the case in England, at least was
During the dynasty of Dandies, now
Perchance succeeded by some other class
Of imitated imitators —how
Irreparably soon decline, alas!
The Demagogues of fashion all below
Is frail; how easily the world is lost
By Love, or War, and, now and then, —by Frost!

BEPPO

LXI

Crushed was Napoleon by the northern Thor,
Who knocked his army down with icy hammer,
Stopped by the *Elements*—like a Whaler—or
A blundering novice in his new French grammar;
Good cause had he to doubt the chance of war,
And as for Fortune—but I dare not d—n her,
Because, were I to ponder to Infinity,
The more I should believe in her Divinity

LXII

She rules the present, past, and all to be yet,
She gives us luck in lotteries, love, and marriage,
I cannot say that she's done much for me yet,
Not that I mean her bounties to disparage,
We've not yet closed accounts, and we shall see yet
How much she'll make amends for past miscarriage,
Meantime the Goddess I'll no more importune,
Unless to thank her when she's made my fortune

LXIII

To turn,—and to return,—the Devil take it!
This story slips for ever through my fingers,
Because, just as the stanza likes to make it,
It needs must be—and so it rather lingers;
This form of verse began, I can't well break it,
But must keep time and tune like public singers;
But if I once get through my present measure,
I'll take another when I'm next at leisure

LXIV

They went to the Ridotto ('tis a place
To which I mean to go myself to-morrow,

BEPPO

Just to divert my thoughts a little space
Because I'm rather hippish, and may borrow
Some spirits, guessing at what kind of face
May lurk beneath each mask, and as my sorrow
Slackens its pace sometimes, I'll make, or find,
Something shall leave it half an hour behind).

LXV

Now Laura moves along the joyous crowd,
Smiles in her eyes, and simpers on her lips;
To some she whispers, others speaks aloud,
To some she curtsies, and to some she dips,
Complains of warmth, and, this complaint avowed,
Her lover brings the lemonade, she sips;
She then surveys, condemns, but pities still
Her dearest friends for being dressed so ill.

LXVI

One has false curls, another too much paint,
A third—where did she buy that frightful turban?
A fourth's so pale she fears she's going to faint,
A fifth's look's vulgar, dowdyish, and suburban,
A sixth's white silk has got a yellow taint,
A seventh's thin muslin surely will be her bane,
And lo! an eighth appears,—“I'll see no more!”
For fear, like Banquo's kings, they reach a score.

LXVII

Meantime, while she was thus at others gazing,
Others were levelling their looks at her,
She heard the men's half-whispered mode of praising,
And, till 'twas done, determined not to stir;
The women only thought it quite amazing
That, at her time of life, so many were

BEPP0

Admirers still,—but “Men are so debased—
Those brazen Creatures always suit their taste.”

LXVIII

For my part, now, I ne'er could understand
Why naughty women—but I won't discuss
A thing which is a scandal to the land,
I only don't see why it should be thus,
And if I were but in a gown and band,
Just to entitle me to make a fuss,
I'd preach on this till Wilberforce and Romilly
Should quote in their next speeches from my homily

LXIX

While Laura thus was seen and seeing, smiling,
Talking, she knew not why, and cared not what,
So that her female friends, with envy broiling,
Beheld her airs, and triumph, and all that,
And well-dressed males still kept before her filing,
And passing bowed and mingled with her chat,
More than the rest one person seemed to stare
With pertinacity that's rather rare.

LXX

He was a Turk, the colour of mahogany,
And Laura saw him, and at first was glad,
Because the Turks so much admire philogyny,
Although their usage of their wives is sad,
'Tis said they use no better than a dog any
Poor woman, whom they purchase like a pad:
They have a number, though they ne'er exhibit 'em,
Four wives by law, and concubines “ad libitum.”

BEPPO

LXXI

They lock them up, and veil, and guard them daily,
They scarcely can behold their male relations,
So that their moments do not pass so gaily
As is supposed the case with northern nations;
Confinement, too, must make them look quite palely;
And as the Turks abhor long conversations,
Their days are either passed in doing nothing,
Or bathing, nursing, making love, and clothing.

LXXII

They cannot read, and so don't lisp in criticism,
Nor write, and so they don't affect the Muse;
Were never caught in epigram or witticism,
Have no romances, sermons, plays, reviews, —
In Harams learning soon would make a pretty schism!
But luckily these Beauties are no "Blues";
No bustling Botherbys have they to show 'em
"That charming passage in the last new poem":

LXXIII

No solemn, antique gentleman of rhyme,
Who having angled all his life for Fame,
And getting but a nibble at a time,
Still fussily keeps fishing on, the same
Small "Triton of the minnows," the sublime
Of Mediocrity, the furious tame,
The Echo's echo, usher of the school
Of female wits, boy bards—in short, a fool!

LXXIV

A stalking oracle of awful phrase,
The approving "*Good!*" (by no means GOOD in law)

BEPPO

Humming like flies around the newest blaze,
The bluest of bluebottles you e'er saw,
Teasing with blame, excruciating with praise,
Gorging the little fame he gets all raw,
Translating tongues he knows not even by letter,
And sweating plays so middling, bad were better

LXXV

One hates an author that's *all author*—fellows
In foolscap uniforms turned up with ink,
So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous,
One don't know what to say to them, or think,
Unless to puff them with a pair of bellows,
Of Coxcombry's worst coxcombs e'en the pink
Are preferable to these shreds of paper,
These unquenched snuffings of the midnight taper.

LXXVI

Of these same we see several, and of others,
Men of the World, who know the World like Men,
Scott, Rogers, Moore, and all the better brothers,
Who think of something else besides the pen;
But for the children of the "Mighty Mother's,"
The would-be wits, and can't-be gentlemen,
I leave them to their daily "tea is ready,"
Smug coterie, and literary lady.

LXXVII

The poor dear Mussul*women* whom I mention
Have none of these instructive pleasant people,
And *one* would seem to them a new invention,
Unknown as bells within a Turkish steeple;
I think 'twould almost be worth while to pension
(Though best-sown projects very often reap ill)

BEPPPO

A missionary author—just to preach
Our Christian usage of the parts of speech.

LXXVIII

No Chemistry for them unfolds her gases,
No Metaphysics are let loose in lectures,
No Circulating Library amasses
Religious novels, moral tales, and strictures
Upon the living manners, as they pass us;
No Exhibition glares with annual pictures;
They stare not on the stars from out their attics,
Nor deal (thank God for that!) in Mathematics.

LXXIX

Why I thank God for that is no great matter,
I have my reasons, you no doubt suppose,
And as, perhaps, they would not highly flatter,
I'll keep them for my life (to come) in prose;
I fear I have a little turn for Satire,
And yet methinks the older that one grows
Inclines us more to laugh than scold, though Laughter
Leaves us so doubly serious shortly after.

LXXX

Oh, Mirth and Innocence! Oh, Milk and Water!
Ye happy mixtures of more happy days!
In these sad centuries of sin and slaughter,
Abominable Man no more allays
His thirst with such pure beverage. No matter,
I love you both, and both shall have my praise
Oh, for old Saturn's reign of sugar-candy!—
Meantime I drink to your return in brandy

BEPPO

LXXXI

Our Laura's Turk still kept his eyes upon her,
Less in the Mussulman than Christian way,
Which seems to say, "Madam, I do you honour,
And while I please to stare, you'll please to stay "
Could staring win a woman, this had won her,
But Laura could not thus be led astray;
She had stood fire too long and well, to boggle
Even at this Stranger's most outlandish ogle

LXXXII

The morning now was on the point of breaking,
A turn of time at which I would advise
Ladies who have been dancing, or partaking
In any other kind of exercise,
To make their preparation for forsaking
The ball-room ere the Sun begins to rise,
Because when once the lamps and candles fail,
His blushes make them look a little pale.

LXXXIII

I've seen some balls and revels in my time,
And stayed them over for some silly reason,
And then I looked (I hope it was no crime)
To see what lady best stood out the season,
And though I've seen some thousands in their prime,
Lovely and pleasing, and who still may please on,
I never saw but one (the stars withdrawn)
Whose bloom could after dancing dare the Dawn.

LXXXIV

The name of this Aurora I'll not mention,
Although I might, for she was nought to me

BEPPO

More than that patent work of God's invention,
A charming woman, whom we like to see,
But writing names would merit reprehension,
Yet if you like to find out this fair *She*,
At the next London or Parisian ball
You still may mark her cheek, out-blooming all.

LXXXV

Laura, who knew it would not do at all
To meet the daylight after seven hours' sitting
Among three thousand people at a ball,
To make her curtsey thought it right and fitting,
The Count was at her elbow with her shawl,
And they the room were on the point of quitting,
When lo! those curséd Gondoliers had got
Just in the very place where they *should not*.

LXXXVI

In this they're like our coachmen, and the cause
Is much the same—the crowd, and pulling, hauling,
With blasphemies enough to break their jaws,
They make a never intermitted bawling
At home, our Bow-street gem'men keep the laws,
And here a sentry stands within your calling;
But for all that, there is a deal of swearing,
And nauseous words past mentioning or bearing.

LXXXVII

The Count and Laura found their boat at last,
And homeward floated o'er the silent tide,
Discussing all the dances gone and past;
The dancers and their dresses, too, beside,
Some little scandals eke; but all aghast
(As to their palace-stairs the rowers glide)

BEPP0

Sate Laura by the side of her adorer,
When lo! the Mussulman was there before her!

LXXXVIII

“Sir,” said the Count, with brow exceeding grave,
“Your unexpected presence here will make
It necessary for myself to crave
Its import? But perhaps ’tis a mistake,
I hope it is so, and, at once to waive
All compliment, I hope so for *your* sake,
You understand my meaning, or you *shall*”
“Sir” (quoth the Turk), “’tis no mistake at all.”

LXXXIX

“That Lady is *my wife*!” Much wonder paints
The lady’s changing cheek, as well it might,
But where an Englishwoman sometimes faints,
Italian females don’t do so outright;
They only call a little on their Saints,
And then come to themselves, almost, or quite;
Which saves much hartshorn, salts, and sprinkling faces,
And cutting stays, as usual in such cases.

XC

She said,—what could she say? Why, not a word,
But the Count courteously invited in
The Stranger, much appeased by what he heard.
“Such things, perhaps, we’d best discuss within,”
Said he; “don’t let us make ourselves absurd
In public, by a scene, nor raise a din,
For then the chief and only satisfaction
Will be much quizzing on the whole transaction.”

BEPPO

XCI

They entered, and for Coffee called—it came,
A beverage for Turks and Christians both,
Although the way they make it's not the same.
Now Laura, much recovered, or less loth
To speak, cries "Beppo! what's your pagan name?"
Bless me! your beard is of amazing growth!
And how came you to keep away so long?
Are you not sensible 'twas very wrong?

XCII

"Are you *really, truly*, now a Turk?
With any other women did you wive?
Is't true they use their fingers for a fork?
Well, that's the prettiest Shawl—as I'm alive!
You'll give it me? They say you eat no pork.
And how so many years did you contrive
To—Bless me! did I ever? No, I never
Saw a man grown so yellow! How's your liver?"

XCIII

"Beppo! that beard of yours becomes you not;
It shall be shaved before you're a day older
Why do you wear it? Oh! I had forgot—
Pray don't you think the weather here is colder?
How do I look? You shan't stir from this spot
In that queer dress, for fear that some beholder
Should find you out, and make the story known.
How short your hair is! Lord! how grey it's grown!"

XCIV

What answer Beppo made to these demands
Is more than I know. He was cast away

BEPPO

here Troy stood once, and nothing stands,
ie a slave of course, and for his pay
ad and bastinadoes, till some bands
ates landing in a neighbouring bay,
d the rogues and prospered, and became
ado of indifferent fame.

XCV

rew rich, and with his riches grew so
the desire to see his home again,
ght himself in duty bound to do so,
ot be always thieving on the main;
ie felt, at times, as Robin Crusoe,
o he hired a vessel come from Spain,
r Corfu. she was a fine polacca,
with twelve hands, and laden with tobacco.

XCVI

and much (heaven knows how gotten!) cash,
en embarked, with risk of life and limb,
clear off, although the attempt was rash,
d that *Providence* protected him—
part, I say nothing—lest we clash
opinions.—well—the ship was trim,
and kept her reckoning fairly on,
three days of calm when off Cape Bonn

XCVII

ached the Island, he transferred his lading,
elf and live stock to another bottom,
sed for a true Turkey-merchant, trading
goods of various names—but I've forgot 'em.
r, he got off by this evading,
se the people would perhaps have shot him,

BEPPPO

And thus at Venice landed to reclaim
His wife, religion, house, and Christian name

XCVIII

His wife received, the Patriarch re-baptized him,
 (He made the Church a present, by the way;)
He then threw off the garments which disguised him,
 And borrowed the Count's smallclothes for a day
His friends the more for his long absence prized him,
 Finding he'd wherewithal to make them gay,
With dinners, where he oft became the laugh of them,
For stories—but *I* don't believe the half of them.

XCIX

Whate'er his youth had suffered, his old age
 With wealth and talking made him some amends,
Though Laura sometimes put him in a rage,
 I've heard the Count and he were always friends
My pen is at the bottom of a page,
 Which being finished, here the story ends
'Tis to be wished it had been sooner done,
But stories somehow lengthen when begun.

BEPPPO

NOTE ON STANZA XLVI

(In talking thus, the writer, more especially
Of women, would be understood to say,
He speaks as a Spectator, not officially,
And always, Reader, in a modest way,
Perhaps, too, in no very great degree shall he
Appear to have offended in this lay,
Since, as all know, without the Sex, our Sonnets
Would seem unfinished, like their untrimmed bonnets)
(Signed) PRINTER'S DEVIL.

1817 — 1818

VERSES ON SAM ROGERS

QUESTION

NOSE and Chin that make a knocker,
Wrinkles that would puzzle Cocker;
Mouth that marks the envious Scorer,
With a Scorpion in each corner
Curling up his tail to sting you,
In the place that most may wring you,
Eyes of lead-like hue and gummy,
Carcase stolen from some mummy,
Bowels—(but they were forgotten,
Save the Liver, and that's rotten),
Skin all sallow, flesh all sodden,
Form the Devil would frighten G—d in
Is't a Corpse stuck up for show,
Galvanized at times to go?
With the Scripture has't connection,
New proof of the Resurrection?
Vampire, Ghost, or Goul, what is it?
I would walk ten miles to miss it

ANSWER

Many passengers arrest one,
To demand the same free question.
Shorter's my reply and franker,—
That's the Bard, and Beau, and Banker.
Yet, if you could bring about
Just to turn him inside out,
Satan's self would seem less sooty,
And his present aspect—Beauty.

VERSES ON SAM ROGERS

Mark that (as he masks the bilious)
Air so softly supercilious,
Chastened bow, and mock humility,
Almost sickened to Servility
Hear his tone (which is to talking
That which creeping is to walking—
Now on all fours, now on tiptoe)
Hear the tales he lends his lip to—
Little hints of heavy scandals—
Every friend by turns he handles:
All that women or that men do
Glides forth in an innuendo—
Clothed in odds and ends of humour,
Herald of each paltry rumour—
From divorces down to dresses,
Woman's frailties, Man's excesses.
All that life presents of evil
Make for him a constant revel.
You're his foe—for that he fears you,
And in absence blasts and sears you,
You're his friend—for that he hates you,
First obliges, and then baits you,
Darting on the opportunity
When to do it with impunity.
You are neither—then he'll flatter,
Till he finds some trait for satire,
Hunts your weak point out, then shows it,
Where it injures, to expose it
In the mode that's most insidious,
Adding every trait that's hideous—
From the bile, whose blackening river
Rushes through his Stygian liver

VERSES ON SAM ROGERS

Then he thinks himself a lover—
Why? I really can't discover,
In his mind, age, face, or figure,
Viper broth might give him vigour.
Let him keep the cauldron steady,
He the venom has already

For his faults—he has but *one*,
'Tis but Envy, when all's done
He but pays the pain he suffers,
Clipping, like a pair of Snuffers,
Light that ought to burn the brighter
For this temporary blighter.
He's the Cancer of his Species,
And will eat himself to pieces,—
Plague personified and Famine,—
Devil, whose delight is damning
For his merits—don't you know 'em?
Once he wrote a pretty Poem.

1818.

STANZAS TO THE PO

1

RIVER, that rollest by the ancient walls,
Where dwells the Lady of my love, when she
Walks by thy brink, and there, perchance, recalls
A faint and fleeting memory of me

2

What if thy deep and ample stream should be
A mirror of my heart, where she may read
The thousand thoughts I now betray to thee,
Wild as thy wave, and headlong as thy speed!

3

What do I say—a mirror of my heart?
Are not thy waters sweeping, dark, and strong?
Such as my feelings were and are, thou art;
And such as thou art were my passions long

4

Time may have somewhat tamed them,—not for ever;
Thou overflow'st thy banks, and not for aye
Thy bosom overboils, congenial river!
Thy floods subside, and mine have sunk away

5

But left long wrecks behind, and now again,
Borne in our old unchanged career, we move;
Thou tendest wildly onwards to the main,
And I—to loving *one* I should not love.

STANZAS TO THE PO

6

The current I behold will sweep beneath
Her native walls, and murmur at her feet;
Her eyes will look on thee, when she shall breathe
The twilight air, unharmed by summer's heat.

7

She will look on thee, — I have looked on thee,
Full of that thought: and, from that moment, ne'er
Thy waters could I dream of, name, or see,
Without the inseparable sigh for her!

8

Her bright eyes will be imaged in thy stream, —
Yes! they will meet the wave I gaze on now.
Mine cannot witness, even in a dream,
That happy wave repass me in its flow!

9

The wave that bears my tears returns no more:
Will she return by whom that wave shall sweep? —
Both tread thy banks, both wander on thy shore,
I by thy source, she by the dark-blue deep.

10

But that which keepeth us apart is not
Distance, nor depth of wave, nor space of earth,
But the distraction of a various lot,
As various as the climates of our birth.

STANZAS TO THE PO

11

A stranger loves the Lady of the land,
Born far beyond the mountains, but his blood
Is all meridian, as if never fanned
By the black wind that chills the polar flood

12

My blood is all meridian, were it not,
I had not left my clime, nor should I be,
In spite of tortures, ne'er to be forgot,
A slave again of love,—at least of thee

13

'Tis vain to struggle—let me perish young—
Live as I lived, and love as I have loved,
To dust if I return, from dust I sprung,
And then, at least, my heart can ne'er be moved.

June 1819

DON JUAN

CANTO THE SECOND

CANTO THE THIRD

CANTO THE FOURTH

FRAGMENT

On the back of the Poet's MS. of Canto I

I would to Heaven that I were so much clay,
As I am blood, bone, marrow, passion, feeling—
Because at least the past were passed away—
And for the future—(but I write this reeling,
Having got drunk exceedingly to-day,
So that I seem to stand upon the ceiling)
I say—the future is a serious matter
And so—for God's sake—hock and soda-water

DON JUAN

I

O H ye! who teach the ingenuous youth of nations,
Holland, France, England, Germany, or Spain,
I pray ye flog them upon all occasions—

It mends their morals, never mind the pain:
The best of mothers and of educations

In Juan's case were but employed in vain,
Since, in a way that's rather of the oddest, he
Became divested of his native modesty.

II

Had he but been placed at a public school,

In the third form, or even in the fourth,
His daily task had kept his fancy cool,

At least, had he been nurtured in the North,
Spain may prove an exception to the rule,

But then exceptions always prove its worth—
A lad of sixteen causing a divorce
Puzzled his tutors very much, of course

III

I can't say that it puzzles me at all,

If all things be considered first, there was
His lady-mother, mathematical,

A—never mind;—his tutor, an old ass;
A pretty woman—(that's quite natural,

Or else the thing had hardly come to pass)
A husband rather old, not much in unity
With his young wife—a time, and opportunity.

IV

Well—well, the World must turn upon its axis,
And all Mankind turn with it, heads or tails,

CANTO THE SECOND

And live and die, make love and pay our taxes,
And as the veering wind shifts, shift our sails;
The King commands us, and the Doctor quacks us,
The Priest instructs, and so our life exhales,
A little breath, love, wine, ambition, fame,
Fighting, devotion, dust, —perhaps a name.

V

I said that Juan had been sent to Cadiz—
A pretty town, I recollect it well—
'Tis there the mart of the colonial trade is,
(Or was, before Peru learned to rebel),
And such sweet girls! —I mean, such graceful ladies,
Their very walk would make your bosom swell;
I can't describe it, though so much it strike,
Nor liken it—I never saw the like.

VI

An Arab horse, a stately stag, a barb
New broke, a camelopard, a gazelle,
No—none of these will do,—and then their garb,
Their veil and petticoat—Alas! to dwell
Upon such things would very near absorb
A canto—then their feet and ankles,—well,
Thank Heaven I've got no metaphor quite ready,
(And so, my sober Muse—come, let's be steady—

VII

Chaste Muse! —well, —if you must, you must)—the veil
Thrown back a moment with the glancing hand,
While the o'erpowering eye, that turns you pale,
Flashes into the heart —All sunny land
Of Love! when I forget you, may I fail
To—say my prayers—but never was there planned

DON JUAN

A dress through which the eyes give such a volley,
Excepting the Venetian Fazzioli

VIII

But to our tale the Donna Inez sent
Her son to Cadiz only to embark,
To stay there had not answered her intent,
But why?—we leave the reader in the dark—
'Twas for a voyage the young man was meant,
As if a Spanish ship were Noah's ark,
To wean him from the wickedness of earth,
And send him like a Dove of Promise forth

IX

Don Juan bade his valet pack his things
According to directions, then received
A lecture and some money, for four springs
He was to travel, and though Inez grieved
(As every kind of parting has its stings),
She hoped he would improve—perhaps believed
A letter, too, she gave (he never read it)
Of good advice—and two or three of credit.

X

In the mean time, to pass her hours away,
Brave Inez now set up a Sunday school
For naughty children, who would rather play
(Like truant rogues) the devil, or the fool,
Infants of three years old were taught that day,
Dunces were whipped, or set upon a stool
The great success of Juan's education
Spurred her to teach another generation

CANTO THE SECOND

XI

Juan embarked—the ship got under way,
The wind was fair, the water passing rough;
A devil of a sea rolls in that bay,
As I, who've crossed it oft, know well enough,
And, standing on the deck, the dashing spray
Flies in one's face, and makes it weather-tough:
And there he stood to take, and take again,
His first—perhaps his last—farewell of Spain.

XII

I can't but say it is an awkward sight
To see one's native land receding through
The growing waters; it unmans one quite,
Especially when life is rather new.
I recollect Great Britain's coast looks white,
But almost every other country's blue,
When gazing on them, mystified by distance,
We enter on our nautical existence.

XIII

So Juan stood, bewildered on the deck:
The wind sung, cordage strained, and sailors swore,
And the ship creaked, the town became a speck,
From which away so fair and fast they bore.
The best of remedies is a beef-steak
Against sea-sickness: try it, Sir, before
You sneer, and I assure you this is true,
For I have found it answer—so may you.

XIV

Don Juan stood, and, gazing from the stern,
Beheld his native Spain receding far

DON JUAN

First partings form a lesson hard to learn,
Even nations feel this when they go to war,
There is a sort of unexpressed concern,
A kind of shock that sets one's heart ajar,
At leaving even the most unpleasant people
And places—one keeps looking at the steeple

XV

But Juan had got many things to leave,
His mother, and a mistress, and no wife,
So that he had much better cause to grieve
Than many persons more advanced in life
And if we now and then a sigh must heave
At quitting even those we quit in strife,
No doubt we weep for those the heart endears—
That is, till deeper griefs congeal our tears

XVI

So Juan wept, as wept the captive Jews
By Babel's waters, still remembering Sion
I'd weep,—but mine is not a weeping Muse,
And such light griefs are not a thing to die on,
Young men should travel, if but to amuse
Themselves; and the next time their servants tie on
Behind their carriages their new portmanteau,
Perhaps it may be lined with this my canto.

XVII

And Juan wept, and much he sighed and thought,
While his salt tears dropped into the salt sea,
“Sweets to the sweet,” (I like so much to quote,
You must excuse this extract,—’tis where she,
The Queen of Denmark, for Ophelia brought
Flowers to the grave;) and, sobbing often, he

CANTO THE SECOND

Reflected on his present situation,
And seriously resolved on reformation.

XVIII

“Farewell, my Spain! a long farewell!” he cried,
“Perhaps I may revisit thee no more,
But die, as many an exiled heart hath died,
Of its own thirst to see again thy shore:
Farewell, where Guadalquivir’s waters glide!
Farewell, my mother! and, since all is o’er,
Farewell, too, dearest Julia!—(here he drew
Her letter out again, and read it through)

XIX

“And oh! if e’er I should forget, I swear—
But that’s impossible, and cannot be—
Sooner shall this blue Ocean melt to air,
Sooner shall Earth resolve itself to sea,
Than I resign thine image, oh, my fair!
Or think of anything, excepting thee,
A mind diseased no remedy can physic—
(Here the ship gave a lurch, and he grew sea-sick).

XX

“Sooner shall heaven kiss earth—(here he fell sicker)
Oh, Julia! what is every other woe?—
(For God’s sake let me have a glass of liquor,
Pedro! Battista! help me down below)
Julia, my love!—(you rascal, Pedro, quicker)—
Oh, Julia!—(this curst vessel pitches so)—
Belovéd Julia, hear me still beseeching!”
(Here he grew inarticulate with retching)

DON JUAN

XXI

He felt that chilling heaviness of heart,
Or rather stomach, which, alas! attends,
Beyond the best apothecary's art,
The loss of love, the treachery of friends,
Or death of those we dote on, when a part
Of us dies with them as each fond hope ends.
No doubt he would have been much more pathetic,
But the sea acted as a strong emetic.

XXII

Love's a capricious power. I've known it hold
Out through a fever caused by its own heat,
But be much puzzled by a cough and cold,
And find a quinsy very hard to treat;
Against all noble maladies he's bold,
But vulgar illnesses don't like to meet,
Nor that a sneeze should interrupt his sigh,
Nor inflammation redden his blind eye

XXIII

But worst of all is nausea, or a pain
About the lower region of the bowels,
Love, who heroically breathes a vein,
Shrinks from the application of hot towels,
And purgatives are dangerous to his reign,
Sea-sickness death: his love was perfect, how else
Could Juan's passion, while the billows roar,
Resist his stomach, ne'er at sea before?

XXIV

The ship, called the most holy "Trinidad,"
Was steering duly for the port Leghorn,

CANTO THE SECOND

For there the Spanish family Moncada
Were settled long ere Juan's sire was born :
They were relations, and for them he had a
Letter of introduction, which the morn
Of his departure had been sent him by
His Spanish friends for those in Italy.

XXV

His suite consisted of three servants and
A tutor, the licentiate Pedrillo,
Who several languages did understand,
But now lay sick and speechless on his pillow,
And, rocking in his hammock, longed for land,
His headache being increased by every billow ;
And the waves oozing through the port-hole made
His berth a little damp, and him afraid.

XXVI

'Twas not without some reason, for the wind
Increased at night, until it blew a gale,
And though 'twas not much to a naval mind,
Some landsmen would have looked a little pale,
For sailors are, in fact, a different kind.
At sunset they began to take in sail,
For the sky showed it would come on to blow,
And carry away, perhaps, a mast or so.

XXVII

At one o'clock the wind with sudden shift
Threw the ship right into the trough of the sea,
Which struck her aft, and made an awkward rift,
Started the stern-post, also shattered the
Whole of her stern-frame, and, ere she could lift
Herself from out her present jeopardy,

DON JUAN

The rudder tore away 'twas time to sound
The pumps, and there were four feet water found

XXVIII

One gang of people instantly was put
Upon the pumps, and the remainder set
To get up part of the cargo, and what not,
But they could not come at the leak as yet,
At last they did get at it really, but
Still their salvation was an even bet
The water rushed through in a way quite puzzling,
While they thrust sheets, shirts, jackets, bales of muslin,

XXIX

Into the opening, but all such ingredients
Would have been vain, and they must have gone down,
Despite of all their efforts and expedients,
But for the pumps I'm glad to make them known
To all the brother tars who may have need hence,
For fifty tons of water were upthrown
By them per hour, and they had all been undone,
But for the maker, Mr. Mann, of London.

XXX

As day advanced the weather seemed to abate,
And then the leak they reckoned to reduce,
And keep the ship afloat, though three feet yet
Kept two hand and one chain-pump still in use.
The wind blew fresh again: as it grew late
A squall came on, and while some guns broke loose,
A gust—which all descriptive power transcends—
Laid with one blast the ship on her beam ends

CANTO THE SECOND

XXXI

There she lay, motionless, and seemed upset;
The water left the hold, and washed the decks,
And made a scene men do not soon forget;
For they remember battles, fires, and wrecks,
Or any other thing that brings regret,
Or breaks their hopes, or hearts, or heads, or necks
Thus drownings are much talked of by the divers,
And swimmers, who may chance to be survivors.

XXXII

Immediately the masts were cut away,
Both main and mizen; first the mizen went,
The main-mast followed: but the ship still lay
Like a mere log, and baffled our intent
Foremast and bowsprit were cut down, and they
Eased her at last (although we never meant
To part with all till every hope was blighted),
And then with violence the old ship righted.

XXXIII

It may be easily supposed, while this
Was going on, some people were unquiet,
That passengers would find it much amiss
To lose their lives, as well as spoil their diet;
That even the able seaman, deeming his
Days nearly o'er, might be disposed to riot,
As upon such occasions tars will ask
For grog, and sometimes drink rum from the cask.

XXXIV

There's nought, no doubt, so much the spirit calms
As rum and true religion: thus it was,

DON JUAN

Some plundered, some drank spirits, some sung psalms,
The high wind made the treble, and as bass
The hoarse harsh waves kept time, fright cured the qualms
Of all the luckless landsmen's sea-sick maws
Strange sounds of wailing, blasphemy, devotion,
Clamoured in chorus to the roaring Ocean.

XXXV

Perhaps more mischief had been done, but for
Our Juan, who, with sense beyond his years,
Got to the spirit-room, and stood before
It with a pair of pistols, and their fears,
As if Death were more dreadful by his door
Of fire than water, spite of oaths and tears,
Kept still aloof the crew, who, ere they sunk,
Thought it would be becoming to die drunk.

XXXVI

'Give us more grog,' they cried, 'for it will be
All one an hour hence' Juan answered, 'No!
'Tis true that Death awaits both you and me,
But let us die like men, not sink below
Like brutes:'—and thus his dangerous post kept he,
And none liked to anticipate the blow;
And even Pedrillo, his most reverend tutor,
Was for some rum a disappointed suitor

XXXVII

The good old gentleman was quite aghast,
And made a loud and pious lamentation,
Repented all his sins, and made a last
Irrevocable vow of reformation;
Nothing should tempt him more (this peril past)
To quit his academic occupation

CANTO THE SECOND

In cloisters of the classic Salamanca,
To follow Juan's wake, like Sancho Panca.

XXXVIII

But now there came a flash of hope once more,
Day broke, and the wind lulled the masts were gone,
The leak increased; shoals round her, but no shore,
The vessel swam, yet still she held her own.
They tried the pumps again, and though, before,
Their desperate efforts seemed all useless grown,
A glimpse of sunshine set some hands to bale—
The stronger pumped, the weaker thrummed a sail.

XXXIX

Under the vessel's keel the sail was passed,
And for the moment it had some effect;
But with a leak, and not a stick of mast,
Nor rag of canvas, what could they expect?
But still 'tis best to struggle to the last,
'Tis never too late to be wholly wrecked:
And though 'tis true that man can only die once,
'Tis not so pleasant in the Gulf of Lyons.

XL

There winds and waves had hurled them, and from thence,
Without their will, they carried them away,
For they were forced with steering to dispense,
And never had as yet a quiet day
On which they might repose, or even commence
A jnymast or rudder, or could say
The ship would swim an hour, which, by good luck,
Still swam—though not exactly like a duck.

DON JUAN

XLI

The wind, in fact, perhaps was rather less,
But the ship laboured so, they scarce could hope
To weather out much longer; the distress
Was also great with which they had to cope
For want of water, and their solid mess
Was scant enough in vain the telescope
Was used—nor sail nor shore appeared in sight,
Nought but the heavy sea, and coming night.

XLII

Again the weather threatened, —again blew
A gale, and in the fore and after hold
Water appeared; yet, though the people knew,
All this, the most were patient, and some bold,
Until the chains and leathers were worn through
Of all our pumps.—a wreck complete she rolled,
At mercy of the waves, whose mercies are
Like human beings during civil war.

XLIII

Then came the carpenter, at last, with tears
In his rough eyes, and told the captain he
Could do no more: he was a man in years,
And long had voyaged through many a stormy sea,
And if he wept at length they were not fears
That made his eyelids as a woman's be,
But he, poor fellow, had a wife and children, —
Two things for dying people quite bewildering.

XLIV

The ship was evidently settling now
Fast by the head; and, all distinction gone,

CANTO THE SECOND

Some went to prayers again, and made a vow
Of candles to their saints—but there were none
To pay them with; and some looked o'er the bow;
Some hoisted out the boats, and there was one
That begged Pedrillo for an absolution,
Who told him to be damned—in his confusion.

XLV

Some lashed them in their hammocks, some put on
Their best clothes, as if going to a fair;
Some cursed the day on which they saw the Sun,
And gnashed their teeth, and, howling, tore their hair;
And others went on as they had begun,
Getting the boats out, being well aware
That a tight boat will live in a rough sea,
Unless with breakers close beneath her lee.

XLVI

The worst of all was, that in their condition,
Having been several days in great distress,
'Twas difficult to get out such provision
As now might render their long suffering less.
Men, even when dying, dislike inanition,
Their stock was damaged by the weather's stress:
Two casks of biscuit, and a keg of butter,
Were all that could be thrown into the cutter.

XLVII

But in the long-boat they contrived to stow
Some pounds of bread, though injured by the wet,
Water, a twenty-gallon cask or so;
Six flasks of wine; and they contrived to get
A portion of their beef up from below,
And with a piece of pork, moreover, met,

DON JUAN

But scarce enough to serve them for a luncheon—
Then there was rum, eight gallons in a puncheon.

XLVIII

The other boats, the yawl and pinnace, had
 Been stove in the beginning of the gale,
And the long-boat's condition was but bad,
 As there were but two blankets for a sail,
And one oar for a mast, which a young lad
 Threw in by good luck over the ship's rail;
And two boats could not hold, far less be stored,
To save one half the people then on board

XLIX

'Twas twilight, and the sunless day went down
 Over the waste of waters, like a veil,
Which, if withdrawn, would but disclose the frown
 Of one whose hate is masked but to assail.
Thus to their hopeless eyes the night was shown,
 And grimly darkled o'er the faces pale,
And the dim desolate deep: twelve days had Fear
Been their familiar, and now Death was here.

L

Some trial had been making at a raft,
 With little hope in such a rolling sea,
A sort of thing at which one would have laughed,
 If any laughter at such times could be,
Unless with people who too much have quaffed,
 And have a kind of wild and horrid glee,
Half epileptical, and half hysterical.—
Their preservation would have been a miracle.

CANTO THE SECOND

LI

At half-past eight o'clock, booms, hencoops, spars,
And all things, for a chance, had been cast loose,
That still could keep afloat the struggling tars,
For yet they strove, although of no great use:
There was no light in heaven but a few stars,
The boats put off o'ercrowded with their crews,
She gave a heel, and then a lurch to port,
And, going down head foremost—sunk, in short.

LII

Then rose from sea to sky the wild farewell—
Then shrieked the timid, and stood still the brave,—
Then some leaped overboard with dreadful yell,
As eager to anticipate their grave,
And the sea yawned around her like a hell,
And down she sucked with her the whirling wave,
Like one who grapples with his enemy,
And strives to strangle him before he die.

LIII

And first one universal shriek there rushed,
Louder than the loud Ocean, like a crash
Of echoing thunder; and then all was hushed,
Save the wild wind and the remorseless dash
Of billows; but at intervals there gushed,
Accompanied by a convulsive splash,
A solitary shriek, the bubbling cry
Of some strong swimmer in his agony.

LIV

The boats, as stated, had got off before,
And in them crowded several of the crew;

DON JUAN

And yet their present hope was hardly more
Than what it had been, for so strong it blew
There was slight chance of reaching any shore;
And then they were too many, though so few—
Nine in the cutter, thirty in the boat,
Were counted in them when they got afloat

LV

All the rest perished, near two hundred souls
Had left their bodies; and what's worse, alas!
When over Catholics the Ocean rolls,
They must wait several weeks before a mass
Takes off one peck of purgatorial coals,
Because, till people know what's come to pass,
They won't lay out their money on the dead—
It costs three francs for every mass that's said.

LVI

Juan got into the long-boat, and there
Contrived to help Pedrillo to a place,
It seemed as if they had exchanged their care,
For Juan wore the magisterial face
Which courage gives, while poor Pedrillo's pair
Of eyes were crying for their owner's case.
Battista, though (a name called shortly Tita),
Was lost by getting at some aqua-vita.

LVII

Pedro, his valet, too, he tried to save,
But the same cause, conducive to his loss,
Left him so drunk, he jumped into the wave,
As o'er the cutter's edge he tried to cross,
And so he found a wine-and-watery grave,
They could not rescue him although so close,

CANTO THE SECOND

Because the sea ran higher every minute,
And for the boat—the crew kept crowding in it.

LVIII

A small old spaniel—which had been Don José's,
His father's, whom he loved, as ye may think,
For on such things the memory reposes
With tenderness—stood howling on the brink,
Knowing (dogs have such intellectual noses!),
No doubt, the vessel was about to sink,
And Juan caught him up, and ere he stepped
Off threw him in, then after him he leaped.

LIX

He also stuffed his money where he could
About his person, and Pedrillo's too,
Who let him do, in fact, whate'er he would,
Not knowing what himself to say, or do,
As every rising wave his dread renewed;
But Juan, trusting they might still get through,
And deeming there were remedies for any ill,
Thus re-embarked his tutor and his spaniel.

LX

'Twas a rough night, and blew so stiffly yet,
That the sail was becalmed between the seas,
Though on the wave's high top too much to set,
They dared not take it in for all the breeze
Each sea curled o'er the stern, and kept them wet,
And made them bale without a moment's ease,
So that themselves as well as hopes were damped,
And the poor little cutter quickly swamped

DON JUAN

LXI

Nine souls more went in her: the long-boat still
Kept above water, with an oar for mast,
Two blankets stitched together, answering ill
Instead of sail, were to the oar made fast,
Though every wave rolled menacing to fill,
And present peril all before surpassed,
They grieved for those who perished with the cutter,
And also for the biscuit-casks and butter.

LXII

The sun rose red and fiery, a sure sign
Of the continuance of the gale to run
Before the sea until it should grow fine,
Was all that for the present could be done.
A few tea-spoonfuls of their rum and wine
Were served out to the people, who begun
To faint, and damaged bread wet through the bags,
And most of them had little clothes but rags.

LXIII

They counted thirty, crowded in a space
Which left scarce room for motion or exertion;
They did their best to modify their case,
One half sate up, though numbed with the immersion,
While t'other half were laid down in their place,
At watch and watch, thus, shivering like the tertian
Ague in its cold fit, they filled their boat,
With nothing but the sky for a great coat

LXIV

'Tis very certain the desire of life
Prolongs it: this is obvious to physicians,

CANTO THE SECOND

When patients, neither plagued with friends nor wife,
Survive through very desperate conditions,
Because they still can hope, nor shines the knife
Nor shears of Atropos before their visions
Despair of all recovery spoils longevity,
And makes men's misery of alarming brevity..

LXV

'Tis said that persons living on annuities
Are longer lived than others, — God knows why,
Unless to plague the grantors, — yet so true it is,
That some, I really think, *do* never die:
Of any creditors the worst a Jew it is,
And *that's* their mode of furnishing supply
In my young days they lent me cash that way,
Which I found very troublesome to pay.

LXVI

'Tis thus with people in an open boat,
They live upon the love of Life, and bear
More than can be believed, or even thought,
And stand like rocks the tempest's wear and tear ;
And hardship still has been the sailor's lot,
Since Noah's ark went cruising here and there ;
She had a curious crew as well as cargo,
Like the first old Greek privateer, the Argo.

LXVII

But man is a carnivorous production,
And must have meals, at least one meal a day,
He cannot live, like woodcocks, upon suction,
But, like the shark and tiger, must have prey;
Although his anatomical construction
Bears vegetables, in a grumbling way.

DON JUAN

Your labouring people think, beyond all question,
Beef, veal, and mutton, better for digestion.

LXVIII

And thus it was with this our hapless crew,
For on the third day there came on a calm,
And though at first their strength it might renew,
And lying on their weariness like balm,
Lulled them like turtles sleeping on the blue
Of Ocean, when they woke they felt a qualm,
And fell all ravenously on their provision,
Instead of hoarding it with due precision

LXIX

The consequence was easily foreseen—
They ate up all they had, and drank their wine,
In spite of all remonstrances, and then
On what, in fact, next day were they to dine?
They hoped the wind would rise, these foolish men!
And carry them to shore, these hopes were fine,
But as they had but one oar, and that brittle,
It would have been more wise to save their victual

LXX

The fourth day came, but not a breath of air,
And Ocean slumbered like an unweaned child.
The fifth day, and their boat lay floating there,
The sea and sky were blue, and clear, and mild—
With their one oar (I wish they had had a pair)
What could they do? and Hunger's rage grew wild.
So Juan's spaniel, spite of his entreating,
Was killed, and portioned out for present eating.

CANTO THE SECOND

LXXI

On the sixth day they fed upon his hide,
And Juan, who had still refused, because
The creature was his father's dog that died,
Now feeling all the vulture in his jaws,
With some remorse received (though first denied)
As a great favour one of the fore-paws,
Which he divided with Pedrillo, who
Devoured it, longing for the other too.

LXXII

The seventh day, and no wind—the burning sun
Blistered and scorched, and, stagnant on the sea,
They lay like carcasses; and hope was none,
Save in the breeze that came not, savagely
They glared upon each other—all was done,
Water, and wine, and food,—and you might see
The longings of the cannibal arise
(Although they spoke not) in their wolfish eyes.

LXXIII

At length one whispered his companion, who
Whispered another, and thus it went round,
And then into a hoarser murmur grew,
An ominous, and wild, and desperate sound;
And when his comrade's thought each sufferer knew,
'Twas but his own, suppressed till now, he found:
And out they spoke of lots for flesh and blood,
And who should die to be his fellow's food.

LXXIV

But ere they came to this, they that day shared
Some leathern caps, and what remained of shoes,

DON JUAN

And then they looked around them, and despaired,
And none to be the sacrifice would choose,
At length the lots were torn up, and prepared,
But of materials that must shock the Muse—
Having no paper, for the want of better,
They took by force from Juan Julia's letter

LXXV

The lots were made, and marked, and mixed, and handed,
In silent horror, and their distribution
Lulled even the savage hunger which demanded,
Like the Promethean vulture, this pollution;
None in particular had sought or planned it,
'Twas Nature gnawed them to this resolution,
By which none were permitted to be neuter—
And the lot fell on Juan's luckless tutor.

LXXVI

He but requested to be bled to death:
The surgeon had his instruments, and bled
Pedrillo, and so gently ebb'd his breath,
You hardly could perceive when he was dead
He died as born, a Catholic in faith,
Like most in the belief in which they're bred,
And first a little crucifix he kissed,
And then held out his jugular and wrist

LXXVII

The surgeon, as there was no other fee,
Had his first choice of morsels for his pains;
But being thirstiest at the moment, he
Preferred a draught from the fast-flowing veins
Part was divided, part thrown in the sea,
And such things as the entrails and the brains

CANTO THE SECOND

Regaled two sharks, who followed o'er the billow—
The sailors ate the rest of poor Pedrillo.

LXXVIII

The sailors ate him, all save three or four,
Who were not quite so fond of animal food,
To these was added Juan, who, before
Refusing his own spaniel, hardly could
Feel now his appetite increased much more;
'Twas not to be expected that he should,
Even in extremity of their disaster,
Dine with them on his pastor and his master.

LXXIX

'Twas better that he did not, for, in fact,
The consequence was awful in the extreme,
For they, who were most ravenous in the act,
Went raging mad—Lord! how they did blaspheme!
And foam, and roll, with strange convulsions racked,
Drinking salt-water like a mountain-stream,
Tearing, and grinning, howling, screeching, swearing,
And, with hyæna-laughter, died despairing.

LXXX

Their numbers were much thinned by this infliction,
And all the rest were thin enough, Heaven knows,
And some of them had lost their recollection,
Happier than they who still perceived their woes,
But others pondered on a new dissection,
As if not warned sufficiently by those
Who had already perished, suffering madly,
For having used their appetites so sadly.

DON JUAN

LXXXI

And next they thought upon the master's mate,
As fattest; but he saved himself, because,
Besides being much averse from such a fate,
There were some other reasons the first was,
He had been rather indisposed of late,
And that which chiefly proved his saving clause
Was a small present made to him at Cadiz,
By general subscription of the ladies

LXXXII

Of poor Pedrillo something still remained,
But was used sparingly,—some were afraid,
And others still their appetites constrained,
Or but at times a little supper made;
All except Juan, who throughout abstained,
Chewing a piece of bamboo, and some lead
At length they caught two boobies, and a noddy,
And then they left off eating the dead body.

LXXXIII

And if Pedrillo's fate should shocking be,
Remember Ugolino condescends
To eat the head of his arch-enemy
The moment after he politely ends
His tale if foes be food in Hell, at sea
'Tis surely fair to dine upon our friends,
When Shipwreck's short allowance grows too scanty,
Without being much more horrible than Dante.

LXXXIV

And the same night there fell a shower of rain,
For which their mouths gaped, like the cracks of earth

CANTO THE SECOND

When dried to summer dust; till taught by pain,
Men really know not what good water's worth,
If you had been in Turkey or in Spain,
Or with a famished boat's-crew had your berth,
Or in the desert heard the camel's bell,
You'd wish yourself where Truth is—in a well.

LXXXV

It poured down torrents, but they were no richer
Until they found a ragged piece of sheet,
Which served them as a sort of spongy pitcher,
And when they deemed its moisture was complete,
They wrung it out, and though a thirsty ditcher
Might not have thought the scanty draught so sweet
As a full pot of porter, to their thinking
They ne'er till now had known the joys of drinking.

LXXXVI

And their baked lips, with many a bloody crack,
Sucked in the moisture, which like nectar streamed,
Their throats were ovens, their swoln tongues were black,
As the rich man's in Hell, who vainly screamed
To beg the beggar, who could not rain back
A drop of dew, when every drop had seemed
To taste of Heaven—If this be true, indeed,
Some Christians have a comfortable creed

LXXXVII

There were two fathers in this ghastly crew,
And with them their two sons, of whom the one
Was more robust and hardy to the view,
But he died early; and when he was gone,
His nearest messmate told his sire, who threw
One glance at him, and said, "Heaven's will be done!"

DON JUAN

I can do nothing," and he saw him thrown
Into the deep without a tear or groan.

LXXXVIII

The other father had a weaklier child,
Of a soft cheek, and aspect delicate,
But the boy bore up long, and with a mild
And patient spirit held aloof his fate;
Little he said, and now and then he smiled,
As if to win a part from off the weight
He saw increasing on his father's heart,
With the deep deadly thought, that they must part

LXXXIX

And o'er him bent his sire, and never raised
His eyes from off his face, but wiped the foam
From his pale lips, and ever on him gazed,
And when the wished-for shower at length was come,
And the boy's eyes, which the dull film half glazed,
Brightened, and for a moment seemed to roam,
He squeezed from out a rag some drops of rain
Into his dying child's mouth—but in vain

XC

The boy expired—the father held the clay,
And looked upon it long, and when at last
Death left no doubt, and the dead burthen lay
Stiff on his heart, and pulse and hope were past,
He watched it wistfully, until away
'Twas borne by the rude wave wherein 'twas cast,
Then he himself sunk down all dumb and shivering,
And gave no sign of life, save his limbs quivering.

CANTO THE SECOND

XC I

Now overhead a rainbow, bursting through
The scattering clouds, shone, spanning the dark sea,
Resting its bright base on the quivering blue;
And all within its arch appeared to be
Clearer than that without, and its wide hue
Waxed broad and waving, like a banner free,
Then changed like to a bow that's bent, and then
Forsook the dim eyes of these shipwrecked men

XC II

It changed, of course, a heavenly chameleon,
The airy child of vapour and the sun,
Brought forth in purple, cradled in vermillion,
Baptized in molten gold, and swathed in dun,
Glittering like crescents o'er a Turk's pavilion,
And blending every colour into one,
Just like a black eye in a recent scuffle
(For sometimes we must box without the muffle).

XC III

Our shipwrecked seamen thought it a good omen—
It is as well to think so, now and then,
'Twas an old custom of the Greek and Roman,
And may become of great advantage when
Folks are discouraged; and most surely no men
Had greater need to nerve themselves again
Than these, and so this rainbow looked like Hope—
Quite a celestial kaleidoscope

XC IV

About this time a beautiful white bird,
Webfooted, not unlike a dove in size

DON JUAN

And plumage (probably it might have erred
Upon its course), passed oft before their eyes,
And tried to perch, although it saw and heard
The men within the boat, and in this guise
It came and went, and fluttered round them till
Night fell:—this seemed a better omen still.

XCV

But in this case I also must remark,
'Twas well this bird of promise did not perch,
Because the tackle of our shattered bark
Was not so safe for roosting as a church,
And had it been the dove from Noah's ark,
Returning there from her successful search,
Which in their way that moment chanced to fall
They would have eat her, olive-branch and all

XCVI

With twilight it again came on to blow,
But not with violence, the stars shone out,
The boat made way, yet now they were so low,
They knew not where or what they were about,
Some fancied they saw land, and some said "No!"
The frequent fog-banks gave them cause to doubt—
Some swore that they heard breakers, others guns,
And all mistook about the latter once.

XCVII

As morning broke, the light wind died away,
When he who had the watch sung out and swore,
If 'twas not land that rose with the sun's ray,
He wished that land he never might see more;
And the rest rubbed their eyes and saw a bay,
Or thought they saw, and shaped their course for shore,

CANTO THE SECOND

For shore it was, and gradually grew
Distinct, and high, and palpable to view.

XCVIII

And then of these some part burst into tears,
And others, looking with a stupid stare,
Could not yet separate their hopes from fears,
And seemed as if they had no further care;
While a few prayed—(the first time for some years)—
And at the bottom of the boat three were
Asleep they shook them by the hand and head,
And tried to awaken them, but found them dead.

XCIX

The day before, fast sleeping on the water,
They found a turtle of the hawk's-bill kind,
And by good fortune, gliding softly, caught her,
Which yielded a day's life, and to their mind
Proved even still a more nutritious matter,
Because it left encouragement behind.
They thought that in such perils, more than chance
Had sent them this for their deliverance.

C

The land appeared a high and rocky coast,
And higher grew the mountains as they drew,
Set by a current, toward it they were lost
In various conjectures, for none knew
To what part of the earth they had been tost,
So changeable had been the winds that blew;
Some thought it was Mount *Ætna*, some the highlands
Of *Candia*, *Cyprus*, *Rhodes*, or other islands.

DON JUAN

CI

Meantime the current, with a rising gale,
Still set them onwards to the welcome shore,
Like Charon's bark of spectres, dull and pale
Their living freight was now reduced to four,
And three dead, whom their strength could not avail
To heave into the deep with those before,
Though the two sharks still followed them, and dashed
The spray into their faces as they splashed.

CII

Famine—despair—cold—thirst and heat, had done
Their work on them by turns, and thinned them to
Such things a mother had not known her son
Amidst the skeletons of that gaunt crew,
By night chilled, by day scorched, thus one by one
They perished, until withered to these few,
But chiefly by a species of self-slaughter,
In washing down Pedrillo with salt water

CIII

As they drew nigh the land, which now was seen
Unequal in its aspect here and there,
They felt the freshness of its growing green,
That waved in forest-tops, and smoothed the air,
And fell upon their glazed eyes like a screen
From glistening waves, and skies so hot and bare—
Lovely seemed any object that should sweep
Away the vast—salt—dread—eternal deep.

CIV

The shore looked wild, without a trace of man,
And girt by formidable waves; but they

CANTO THE SECOND

Were mad for land, and thus their course they ran,
Though right ahead the roaring breakers lay.
A reef between them also now began
To show its boiling surf and bounding spray,
But finding no place for their landing better,
They ran the boat for shore,—and upset her.

CV

But in his native stream, the Guadalquivir,
Juan to lave his youthful limbs was wont;
And having learnt to swim in that sweet river,
Had often turned the art to some account:
A better swimmer you could scarce see ever,
He could, perhaps, have passed the Hellespont,
As once (a feat on which ourselves we prided)
Leander, Mr. Ekenhead, and I did.

CVI

So here, though faint, emaciated, and stark,
He buoyed his boyish limbs, and strove to ply
With the quick wave, and gain, ere it was dark,
The beach which lay before him, high and dry
The greatest danger here was from a shark,
That carried off his neighbour by the thigh;
As for the other two, they could not swim,
So nobody arrived on shore but him.

CVII

Nor yet had he arrived but for the oar,
Which, providentially for him, was washed
Just as his feeble arms could strike no more,
And the hard wave o'erwhelmed him as 'twas dashed
Within his grasp, he clung to it, and sore
The waters beat while he thereto was lashed;

DON JUAN

At last, with swimming, wading, scrambling, he
Rolled on the beach, half-senseless, from the sea

CVIII

There, breathless, with his digging nails he clung
Fast to the sand, lest the returning wave,
From whose reluctant roar his life he wrung,
Should suck him back to her insatiate grave
And there he lay, full length, where he was flung,
Before the entrance of a cliff-worn cave,
With just enough of life to feel its pain,
And deem that it was saved, perhaps, in vain

CIX

With slow and staggering effort he arose,
But sunk again upon his bleeding knee
And quivering hand; and then he looked for those
Who long had been his mates upon the sea,
But none of them appeared to share his woes,
Save one, a corpse, from out the famished three,
Who died two days before, and now had found
An unknown barren beach for burial ground

CX

And as he gazed, his dizzy brain spun fast,
And down he sunk; and as he sunk, the sand
Swam round and round, and all his senses passed
He fell upon his side, and his stretched hand
Drooped dripping on the oar (their jurymast),
And, like a withered lily, on the land
His slender frame and pallid aspect lay,
As fair a thing as e'er was formed of clay

CANTO THE SECOND

CXI

How long in his damp trance young Juan lay
He knew not, for the earth was gone for him,
And Time had nothing more of night nor day
For his congealing blood, and senses dim,
And how this heavy faintness passed away
He knew not, till each painful pulse and limb,
And tingling vein, seemed throbbing back to life,
For Death, though vanquished, still retired with strife.

CXII

His eyes he opened, shut, again unclosed,
For all was doubt and dizziness; he thought
He still was in the boat, and had but dozed,
And felt again with his despair o'erwrought,
And wished it Death in which he had reposed,
And then once more his feelings back were brought,
And slowly by his swimming eyes was seen
A lovely female face of seventeen

CXIII

'Twas bending close o'er his, and the small mouth
Seemed almost prying into his for breath;
And chafing him, the soft warm hand of youth
Recalled his answering spirits back from Death
And, bathing his chill temples, tried to soothe
Each pulse to animation, till beneath
Its gentle touch and trembling care, a sigh
To these kind efforts made a low reply

CXIV

Then was the cordial poured, and mantle flung
Around his scarce-clad limbs; and the fair arm

DON JUAN

Raised higher the faint head which o'er it hung,
And her transparent cheek, all pure and warm,
Pillowed his death-like forehead, then she wrung
His dewy curls, long drenched by every storm,
And watched with eagerness each throb that drew
A sigh from his heaved bosom—and hers, too

CXV

And lifting him with care into the cave,
The gentle girl, and her attendant,—one
Young, yet her elder, and of brow less grave,
And more robust of figure,—then begun
To kindle fire, and as the new flames gave
Light to the rocks that roofed them, which the sun
Had never seen, the maid, or whatso'er
She was, appeared distinct, and tall, and fair.

CXVI

Her brow was overhung with coins of gold,
That sparkled o'er the auburn of her hair—
Her clustering hair, whose longer locks were rolled
In braids behind, and though her stature were
Even of the highest for a female mould,
They nearly reached her heel; and in her air
There was a something which bespoke command,
As one who was a Lady in the land.

CXVII

Her hair, I said, was auburn, but her eyes
Were black as Death, their lashes the same hue,
Of downcast length, in whose silk shadow lies
Deepest attraction, for when to the view
Forth from its raven fringe the full glance flies,
Ne'er with such force the swiftest arrow flew,

CANTO THE SECOND

'Tis as the snake late coiled, who pours his length,
And hurls at once his venom and his strength.

CXVIII

Her brow was white and low, her cheek's pure dye
Like twilight rosy still with the set sun;
Short upper lip—sweet lips! that make us sigh
Ever to have seen such, for she was one
Fit for the model of a statuary
(A race of mere impostors, when all's done—
I've seen much finer women, ripe and real,
Than all the nonsense of their stone ideal).

CXIX

I'll tell you why I say so, for 'tis just
One should not rail without a decent cause:
There was an Irish lady, to whose bust
I ne'er saw justice done, and yet she was
A frequent model, and if e'er she must
Yield to stern Time and Nature's wrinkling laws,
They will destroy a face which mortal thought
Ne'er compassed, nor less mortal chisel wrought.

CXX

And such was she, the lady of the cave:
Her dress was very different from the Spanish,
Simpler, and yet of colours not so grave,
For, as you know, the Spanish women banish
Bright hues when out of doors, and yet, while wave
Around them (what I hope will never vanish)
The basquiña and the mantilla, they
Seem at the same time mystical and gay.

DON JUAN

CXXI

But with our damsel this was not the case
Her dress was many-coloured, finely spun;
Her locks curled negligently round her face,
But through them gold and gems profusely shone:
Her girdle sparkled, and the richest lace
Flowed in her veil, and many a precious stone
Flashed on her little hand; but, what was shocking,
Her small snow feet had slippers, but no stocking

CXXII

The other female's dress was not unlike,
But of inferior materials she
Had not so many ornaments to strike,
Her hair had silver only, bound to be
Her dowry, and her veil, in form alike,
Was coarser, and her air, though firm, less free,
Her hair was thicker, but less long, her eyes
As black, but quicker, and of smaller size.

CXXIII

And these two tended him, and cheered him both
With food and raiment, and those soft attentions,
Which are—as I must own—of female growth,
And have ten thousand delicate inventions
They made a most superior mess of broth,
A thing which poesy but seldom mentions,
But the best dish that e'er was cooked since Homer's
Achilles ordered dinner for new comers.

CXXIV

I'll tell you who they were, this female pair,
Lest they should seem Princesses in disguise;

CANTO THE SECOND

Besides, I hate all mystery, and that air
Of clap-trap, which your recent poets prize;
And so, in short, the girls they really were
They shall appear before your curious eyes,
Mistress and maid: the first was only daughter
Of an old man, who lived upon the water.

CXXV

A fisherman he had been in his youth,
And still a sort of fisherman was he;
But other speculations were, in sooth,
Added to his connection with the sea,
Perhaps not so respectable, in truth
A little smuggling, and some piracy,
Left him, at last, the sole of many masters
Of an ill-gotten million of piastres

CXXVI

A fisher, therefore, was he, — though of men,
Like Peter the Apostle, — and he fished
For wandering merchant-vessels, now and then,
And sometimes caught as many as he wished;
The cargoes he confiscated, and gain
He sought in the slave-market too, and dished
Full many a morsel for that Turkish trade,
By which, no doubt, a good deal may be made.

CXXVII

He was a Greek, and on his isle had built
(One of the wild and smaller Cyclades)
A very handsome house from out his guilt,
And there he lived exceedingly at ease;
Heaven knows what cash he got, or blood he spilt,
A sad old fellow was he, if you please;

DON JUAN

But this I know, it was a spacious building,
Full of barbaric carving, paint, and gilding.

CXXVIII

He had an only daughter, called Haidée,
The greatest heiress of the Eastern Isles,
Besides, so very beautiful was she,
Her dowry was as nothing to her smiles
Still in her teens, and like a lovely tree
She grew to womanhood, and between whiles
Rejected several suitors, just to learn
How to accept a better in his turn.

CXXIX

And walking out upon the beach, below
The cliff, towards sunset, on that day she found,
Insensible, —not dead, but nearly so, —
Don Juan, almost famished, and half drowned,
But being naked, she was shocked, you know,
Yet deemed herself in common pity bound,
As far as in her lay, “to take him in,
A stranger” dying—with so white a skin.

CXXX

But taking him into her father's house
Was not exactly the best way to save,
But like conveying to the cat the mouse,
Or people in a trance into their grave;
Because the good old man had so much “vous,”
Unlike the honest Arab thieves so brave,
He would have hospitably cured the stranger,
And sold him instantly when out of danger.

CANTO THE SECOND

CXXXI

And therefore, with her maid, she thought it best
 (A virgin always on her maid relies)
To place him in the cave for present rest:
 And when, at last, he opened his black eyes,
Their charity increased about their guest,
 And their compassion grew to such a size,
It opened half the turnpike-gates to Heaven—
(St. Paul says, 'tis the toll which must be given)

CXXXII

They made a fire, —but such a fire as they
 Upon the moment could contrive with such
Materials as were cast up round the bay,
 Some broken planks, and oars, that to the touch
Were nearly tinder, since, so long they lay,
 A mast was almost crumbled to a crutch;
But, by God's grace, here wrecks were in such plenty,
That there was fuel to have furnished twenty.

CXXXIII

He had a bed of furs, and a pelisse,
 For Haïdée stripped her sables off to make
His couch, and, that he might be more at ease,
 And warm, in case by chance he should awake,
They also gave a petticoat apiece,
 She and her maid, —and promised by daybreak
To pay him a fresh visit, with a dish
For breakfast, of eggs, coffee, bread, and fish.

CXXXIV

And thus they left him to his lone repose
 Juan slept like a top, or like the dead,

DON JUAN

Who sleep at last, perhaps (God only knows),
Just for the present and in his lulled head
Not even a vision of his former woes
Throbbled in accursed dreams, which sometimes spread
Unwelcome visions of our former years,
Till the eye, cheated, opens thick with tears

CXXXV

Young Juan slept all dreamless —but the maid,
Who smoothed his pillow, as she left the den
Looked back upon him, and a moment stayed
And turned, believing that he called again
He slumbered, yet she thought, at least she said
(The heart will slip, even as the tongue and pen),
He had pronounced her name—but she forgot
That at this moment Juan knew it not.

CXXXVI

And pensive to her father's house she went,
Enjoining silence strict to Zoe, who
Better than her knew what, in fact, she meant,
She being wiser by a year or two
A year or two's an age when rightly spent,
And Zoe spent hers, as most women do,
In gaining all that useful sort of knowledge
Which is acquired in Nature's good old college

CXXXVII

The morn broke, and found Juan slumbering still
Fast in his cave, and nothing clashed upon
His rest; the rushing of the neighbouring rill,
And the young beams of the excluded Sun,
Troubled him not, and he might sleep his fill;
And need he had of slumber yet, for none

CANTO THE SECOND

Had suffered more—his hardships were comparative
To those related in my grand-dad's "Narrative."

CXXXVIII

Not so Haidée she sadly tossed and tumbled,
And started from her sleep, and, turning o'er,
Dreamed of a thousand wrecks, o'er which she stumbled,
And handsome corpses strewed upon the shore,
And woke her maid so early that she grumbled,
And called her father's old slaves up, who swore
In several oaths—Armenian, Turk, and Greek—
They knew not what to think of such a freak.

CXXXIX

But up she got, and up she made them get,
With some pretence about the Sun, that makes
Sweet skies just when he rises, or is set;
And 'tis, no doubt, a sight to see when breaks
Bright Phœbus, while the mountains still are wet
With mist, and every bird with him awakes,
And night is flung off like a mourning suit
Worn for a husband,—or some other brute

CXL

I say, the Sun is a most glorious sight,
I've seen him rise full oft, indeed of late
I have sat up on purpose all the night,
Which hastens, as physicians say, one's fate;
And so all ye, who would be in the right
In health and purse, begin your day to date
From daybreak, and when confined at fourscore,
Engrave upon the plate, you rose at four.

DON JUAN

CXLI

And Haidée met the morning face to face,
Her own was freshest, though a feverish flush
Had dyed it with the headlong blood, whose race
From heart to cheek is curbed into a blush,
Like to a torrent which a mountain's base,
That overpowers some Alpine river's rush,
Checks to a lake, whose waves in circles spread;
Or the Red Sea—but the sea is not red.

CXLII

And down the cliff the island virgin came,
And near the cave her quick light footsteps drew,
While the Sun smiled on her with his first flame,
And young Aurora kissed her lips with dew,
Taking her for a sister; just the same
Mistake you would have made on seeing the two,
Although the mortal, quite as fresh and fair,
Had all the advantage, too, of not being air

CXLIII

And when into the cavern Haidée stepped
All timidly, yet rapidly, she saw
That like an infant Juan sweetly slept,
And then she stopped, and stood as if in awe
(For sleep is awful), and on tiptoe crept
And wrapped him closer, lest the air, too raw,
Should reach his blood, then o'er him still as Death
Bent, with hushed lips, that drank his scarce-drawn breath.

CXLIV

And thus like to an angel o'er the dying
Who die in righteousness, she leaned; and there

CANTO THE SECOND

All tranquilly the shipwrecked boy was lying,

As o'er him lay the calm and stirless air

But Zoe the meantime some eggs was frying,

Since, after all, no doubt the youthful pair

Must breakfast—and, betimes, lest they should ask it,

She drew out her provision from the basket.

CXLV

She knew that the best feelings must have victual,

And that a shipwrecked youth would hungry be,

Besides, being less in love, she yawned a little,

And felt her veins chilled by the neighbouring sea;

And so, she cooked their breakfast to a tittle,

I can't say that she gave them any tea,

But there were eggs, fruit, coffee, bread, fish, honey,

With Scio wine,—and all for love, not money.

CXLVI

And Zoe, when the eggs were ready, and

The coffee made, would fain have wakened Juan;

But Haidée stopped her with her quick small hand,

And without a word, a sign her finger drew on

Her lip, which Zoe needs must understand;

And, the first breakfast spoilt, prepared a new one,

Because her mistress would not let her break

That sleep which seemed as it would ne'er awake.

CXLVII

For still he lay, and on his thin worn cheek

A purple hectic played like dying day

On the snow-tops of distant hills, the streak

Of sufferance yet upon his forehead lay,

Where the blue veins looked shadowy, shrunk, and weak;

And his black curls were dewy with the spray,

DON JUAN

Which weighed upon them yet, all damp and salt,
Mixed with the stony vapours of the vault

CXLVIII

And she bent o'er him, and he lay beneath,
Hushed as a babe upon its mother's breast,
Drooped as the willow when no winds can breathe,
Lulled like the depth of Ocean when at rest,
Fair as the crowning rose of the whole wreath,
Soft as the callow cygnet in its nest,
In short, he was a very pretty fellow,
Although his woes had turned him rather yellow

CXLIX

He woke and gazed, and would have slept again,
But the fair face which met his eyes forbade
Those eyes to close, though weariness and pain
Had further sleep a further pleasure made
For Woman's face was never formed in vain
For Juan, so that even when he prayed
He turned from grisly saints, and martyrs hairy,
To the sweet portraits of the Virgin Mary

CL

And thus upon his elbow he arose,
And looked upon the lady, in whose cheek
The pale contended with the purple rose,
As with an effort she began to speak,
Her eyes were eloquent, her words would pose,
Although she told him, in good modern Greek,
With an Ionian accent, low and sweet,
That he was faint, and must not talk, but eat

CANTO THE SECOND

CLI

Now Juan could not understand a word,
Being no Grecian; but he had an ear,
And her voice was the warble of a bird,
So soft, so sweet, so delicately clear,
That finer, simpler music ne'er was heard;
The sort of sound we echo with a tear,
Without knowing why—an overpowering tone,
Whence Melody descends as from a throne

CLII

And Juan gazed as one who is awake
By a distant organ, doubting if he be
Not yet a dreamer, till the spell is broke
By the watchman, or some such reality,
Or by one's early valet's curséd knock,
At least it is a heavy sound to me,
Who like a morning slumber—for the night
Shows stars and women in a better light.

CLIII

And Juan, too, was helped out from his dream,
Or sleep, or whatsoe'er it was, by feeling
A most prodigious appetite; the steam
Of Zoe's cookery no doubt was stealing
Upon his senses, and the kindling beam
Of the new fire, which Zoe kept up, kneeling,
To stir her viands, made him quite awake
And long for food, but chiefly a beef-steak.

CLIV

But beef is rare within these oxless isles;
Goat's flesh there is, no doubt, and kid, and mutton,

DON JUAN

And, when a holiday upon them smiles,
A joint upon their barbarous spits they put on
But this occurs but seldom, between whiles,
For some of these are rocks with scarce a hut on,
Others are fair and fertile, among which
This, though not large, was one of the most rich.

CLV

I say that beef is rare, and can't help thinking
That the old fable of the Minotaur—
From which our modern morals, rightly shrinking,
Condemn the royal lady's taste who wore
A cow's shape for a mask—was only (sinking
The allegory) a mere type, no more,
That Pasiphae promoted breeding cattle,
To make the Cretans bloodier in battle.

CLVI

For we all know that English people are
Fed upon beef—I won't say much of beer,
Because 'tis liquor only, and being far
From this my subject, has no business here,
We know, too, they are very fond of war,
A pleasure—like all pleasures—rather dear,
So were the Cretans—from which I infer,
That beef and battles both were owing to her.

CLVII

But to resume. The languid Juan raised
His head upon his elbow, and he saw
A sight on which he had not lately gazed,
As all his latter meals had been quite raw,
Three or four things, for which the Lord he praised,
And, feeling still the famished vulture gnaw,

CANTO THE SECOND

He fell upon whate'er was offered, like
A priest, a shark, an alderman, or pike.

CLVIII

He ate, and he was well supplied; and she,
Who watched him like a mother, would have fed
Him past all bounds, because she smiled to see
Such appetite in one she had deemed dead:
But Zoe, being older than Haidée,
Knew (by tradition, for she ne'er had read)
That famished people must be slowly nurst,
And fed by spoonfuls, else they always burst.

CLIX

And so she took the liberty to state,
Rather by deeds than words, because the case
Was urgent, that the gentleman, whose fate
Had made her mistress quit her bed to trace
The sea-shore at this hour, must leave his plate,
Unless he wished to die upon the place—
She snatched it, and refused another morsel,
Saying, he had gorged enough to make a horse ill.

CLX

Next they—he being naked, save a tattered
Pair of scarce decent trowsers—went to work,
And in the fire his recent rags they scattered,
And dressed him, for the present, like a Turk,
Or Greek—that is, although it not much mattered,
Omitting turban, slippers, pistol, dirk,—
They furnished him, entire except some stitches,
With a clean shirt, and very spacious breeches.

DON JUAN

CLXI

And then fair Haidée tried her tongue at speaking,
But not a word could Juan comprehend,
Although he listened so that the young Greek in
Her earnestness would ne'er have made an end;
And, as he interrupted not, went eking
Her speech out to her protégé and friend,
Till pausing at the last her breath to take,
She saw he did not understand Romaic.

CLXII

And then she had recourse to nods, and signs,
And smiles, and sparkles of the speaking eye,
And read (the only book she could) the lines
Of his fair face, and found, by sympathy,
The answer eloquent, where the Soul shines
And darts in one quick glance a long reply,
And thus in every look she saw expressed
A world of words, and things at which she guessed.

CLXIII

And now, by dint of fingers and of eyes,
And words repeated after her, he took
A lesson in her tongue, but by surmise,
No doubt, less of her language than her look
As he who studies fervently the skies
Turns oftener to the stars than to his book,
Thus Juan learned his *alpha beta* better
From Haidée's glance than any graven letter.

CLXIV

'Tis pleasing to be schooled in a strange tongue
By female lips and eyes—that is, I mean,

CANTO THE SECOND

When both the teacher and the taught are young,
As was the case, at least, where I have been ;
They smile so when one's right, and when one's wrong
They smile still more, and then there intervene
Pressure of hands, perhaps even a chaste kiss,—
I learned the little that I know by this:

CLXV

That is, some words of Spanish, Turk, and Greek,
Italian not at all, having no teachers;
Much English I cannot pretend to speak,
Learning that language chiefly from its preachers,
Barrow, South, Tillotson, whom every week
I study, also Blair—the highest reachers
Of eloquence in piety and prose—
I hate your poets, so read none of those.

CLXVI

As for the ladies, I have nought to say,
A wanderer from the British world of Fashion,
Where I, like other “dogs, have had my day,”
Like other men, too, may have had my passion—
But that, like other things, has passed away,
And all her fools whom I *could* lay the lash on:
Foes, friends, men, women, now are nought to me
But dreams of what has been, no more to be.

CLXVII

Return we to Don Juan. He begun
To hear new words, and to repeat them, but
Some feelings, universal as the Sun,
Were such as could not in his breast be shut
More than within the bosom of a nun:
He was in love,—as you would be, no doubt,

DON JUAN

With a young benefactress, —so was she,
Just in the way we very often see.

CLXVIII

And every day by daybreak—rather early
For Juan, who was somewhat fond of rest—
She came into the cave, but it was merely
To see her bird reposing in his nest;
And she would softly stir his locks so curly,
Without disturbing her yet slumbering guest,
Breathing all gently o'er his cheek and mouth,
As o'er a bed of roses the sweet south.

CLXIX

And every morn his colour freshlier came,
And every day helped on his convalescence,
'Twas well, because health in the human frame
Is pleasant, besides being true Love's essence,
For health and idleness to Passion's flame
Are oil and gunpowder, and some good lessons
'Are also learnt from Ceres and from Bacchus,
Without whom Venus will not long attack us.

CLXX

While Venus fills the heart (without heart, really,
Love, though good always, is not quite so good),
Ceres presents a plate of vermicelli, —
For Love must be sustained like flesh and blood, —
While Bacchus pours out wine, or hands a jelly:
Eggs, oysters, too, are amatory food,
But who is their purveyor from above
Heaven knows, —it may be Neptune, Pan, or Jove.

CANTO THE SECOND

CLXXI

When Juan woke he found some good things ready,
A bath, a breakfast, and the finest eyes
That ever made a youthful heart less steady,
Besides her maid's, as pretty for their size;
But I have spoken of all this already—
A repetition's tiresome and unwise, —
Well—Juan, after bathing in the sea,
Came always back to coffee and Haidée.

CLXXII

Both were so young, and one so innocent,
That bathing passed for nothing, Juan seemed
To her, as 'twere, the kind of being sent,
Of whom these two years she had nightly dreamed,
A something to be loved, a creature meant
To be her happiness, and whom she deemed
To render happy; all who joy would win
Must share it, —Happiness was born a twin.

CLXXIII

It was such pleasure to behold him, such
Enlargement of existence to partake
Nature with him, to thrill beneath his touch,
To watch him slumbering, and to see him wake:
To live with him for ever were too much;
But then the thought of parting made her quake;
He was her own, her ocean-treasure, cast
Like a rich wreck—her first love, and her last.

CLXXIV

And thus a moon rolled on, and fair Haidée
Paid daily visits to her boy, and took

DON JUAN

Such plentiful precautions, that still he
Remained unknown within his craggy nook,
At last her father's prow put out to sea,
For certain merchantmen upon the look,
Not as of yore to carry off an Io,
But three Ragusan vessels, bound for Scio.

CLXXV

Then came her freedom, for she had no mother,
So that, her father being at sea, she was
Free as a married woman, or such other
Female, as where she likes may freely pass,
Without even the encumbrance of a brother,
The freest she that ever gazed on glass.
I speak of Christian lands in this comparison,
Where wives, at least, are seldom kept in garrison.

CLXXVI

Now she prolonged her visits and her talk
(For they must talk), and he had learnt to say
So much as to propose to take a walk, —
For little had he wandered since the day
On which, like a young flower snapped from the stalk,
Drooping and dewy on the beach he lay, —
And thus they walked out in the afternoon,
And saw the sun set opposite the moon.

CLXXVII

It was a wild and breaker-beaten coast,
With cliffs above, and a broad sandy shore,
Guarded by shoals and rocks as by an host,
With here and there a creek, whose aspect wore
A better welcome to the tempest-tost;
And rarely ceased the haughty billow's roar,

CANTO THE SECOND

Save on the dead long summer days, which make
The outstretched Ocean glitter like a lake.

CLXXVIII

And the small ripple spilt upon the beach
Scarcely o'erpassed the cream of your champagne,
When o'er the brim the sparkling bumpers reach,
That spring-dew of the spirit! the heart's rain!
Few things surpass old wine, and they may preach
Who please,—the more because they preach in vain,
Let us have Wine and Woman, Mirth and Laughter,
Sermons and soda-water the day after

CLXXIX

Man, being reasonable, must get drunk,
✓ The best of Life is but intoxication
Glory, the Grape, Love, Gold, in these are sunk
The hopes of all men, and of every nation;
Without their sap, how branchless were the trunk
Of Life's strange tree, so fruitful on occasion!
But to return,—Get very drunk; and when
You wake with headache, you shall see what then!

CLXXX

Ring for your valet—bid him quickly bring
Some hock and soda-water, then you'll know
A pleasure worthy Xerxes the great king,
For not the blest sherbet, sublimed with snow,
Nor the first sparkle of the desert-spring,
Nor Burgundy in all its sunset glow,
After long travel, ennui, love, or slaughter,
Vie with that draught of hock and soda-water!

DON JUAN

CLXXXI

The coast—I think it was the coast that I
Was just describing—Yes, it *was* the coast—
Lay at this period quiet as the sky,
The sands untumbled, the blue waves untossed,
And all was stillness, save the sea-bird's cry,
And dolphin's leap, and the little billow crossed
By some low rock or shelve, that made it fret
Against the boundary it scarcely wet.

CLXXXII

And forth they wandered, her sire being gone,
As I have said, upon an expedition;
And mother, brother, guardian, she had none,
Save Zoe, who, although with due precision
She waited on her lady with the Sun,
Thought daily service was her only mission,
Bringing warm water, wreathing her long tresses,
And asking now and then for cast-off dresses

CLXXXIII

It was the cooling hour, just when the rounded
Red sun sinks down behind the azure hill,
Which then seems as if the whole earth it bounded,
Circling all Nature, hushed, and dim, and still,
With the far mountain-crescent half surrounded
On one side, and the deep sea calm and chill
Upon the other, and the rosy sky
With one star sparkling through it like an eye

CLXXXIV

And thus they wandered forth, and hand in hand,
Over the shining pebbles and the shells,

CANTO THE SECOND

Glided along the smooth and hardened sand,
And in the worn and wild receptacles
Worked by the storms, yet worked as it were planned—
In hollow halls, with sparry roofs and cells,
They turned to rest, and, each clasped by an arm,
Yielded to the deep twilight's purple charm.

CLXXXV

They looked up to the sky, whose floating glow
Spread like a rosy Ocean, vast and bright,
They gazed upon the glittering sea below,
Whence the broad Moon rose circling into sight;
They heard the waves' splash, and the wind so low,
And saw each other's dark eyes darting light
Into each other—and, beholding this,
Their lips drew near, and clung into a kiss,

CLXXXVI

A long, long kiss, a kiss of Youth, and Love,
And Beauty, all concentrating like rays
Into one focus, kindled from above;
Such kisses as belong to early days,
Where Heart, and Soul, and Sense, in concert move,
And the blood's lava, and the pulse a blaze,
Each kiss a heart-quake,—for a kiss's strength,
I think, it must be reckoned by its length.

CLXXXVII

By length I mean duration, theirs endured
Heaven knows how long—no doubt they never reckoned;
And if they had, they could not have secured
The sum of their sensations to a second:
They had not spoken, but they felt allured,
As if their souls and lips each other beckoned,

DON JUAN

Which, being joined, like swarming bees they clung—
Their hearts the flowers from whence the honey sprung.

CLXXXVIII

They were alone, but not alone as they
Who shut in chambers think it loneliness,
The silent Ocean, and the starlight bay,
The twilight glow, which momentarily grew less,
The voiceless sands, and dropping caves, that lay
Around them, made them to each other press,
As if there were no life beneath the sky
Save theirs, and that their life could never die

CLXXXIX

They feared no eyes nor ears on that lone beach;
They felt no terrors from the night; they were
All in all to each other though their speech
Was broken words, they *thought* a language there,—
And all the burning tongues the Passions teach
Found in one sigh the best interpreter
Of Nature's oracle—first love,—that all
Which Eve has left her daughters since her fall

CXC

Haidée spoke not of scruples, asked no vows,
Nor offered any; she had never heard
Of plight and promises to be a spouse,
Or perils by a loving maid incurred;
She was all which pure ignorance allows,
And flew to her young mate like a young bird;
And, never having dreamt of falsehood, she
Had not one word to say of constancy.

CANTO THE SECOND

CXCI

She loved, and was belovéd—she adored,
And she was worshipped after Nature's fashion—
Their intense souls, into each other poured,
If souls could die, had perished in that passion, —
But by degrees their senses were restored,
Again to be o'ercome, again to dash on ;
And, beating 'gainst *his* bosom, Haidée's heart
Felt as if never more to beat apart.

CXCII

Alas! they were so young, so beautiful,
So lonely, loving, helpless, and the hour
Was that in which the Heart is always full,
And, having o'er itself no further power,
Prompts deeds Eternity can not annul,
But pays off moments in an endless shower
Of hell-fire—all prepared for people giving
Pleasure or pain to one another living.

CXCIII

Alas! for Juan and Haidée! they were
So loving and so lovely—till then never,
Excepting our first parents, such a pair
Had run the risk of being damned for ever.
And Haidée, being devout as well as fair,
Had, doubtless, heard about the Stygian river,
And Hell and Purgatory—but forgot
Just in the very crisis she should not.

CXCIV

They look upon each other, and their eyes
Gleam in the moonlight; and her white arm clasps

DON JUAN

Round Juan's head, and his around her lies
Half buried in the tresses which it grasps,
She sits upon his knee, and drinks his sighs,
He hers, until they end in broken gasps,
And thus they form a group that's quite antique,
Half naked, loving, natural, and Greek.

CXCV

And when those deep and burning moments passed,
And Juan sunk to sleep within her arms,
She slept not, but all tenderly, though fast,
Sustained his head upon her bosom's charms;
And now and then her eye to Heaven is cast,
And then on the pale cheek her breast now warms,
Pillowed on her o'erflowing heart, which pants
With all it granted, and with all it grants.

CXCVI

An infant when it gazes on a light,
A child the moment when it drains the breast,
A devotee when soars the Host in sight,
An Arab with a stranger for a guest,
A sailor when the prize has struck in fight,
A miser filling his most hoarded chest,
Feel rapture, but not such true joy are reaping
As they who watch o'er what they love while sleeping.

CXCVII

For there it lies so tranquil, so beloved,
All that it hath of life with us is living,
So gentle, stirless, helpless, and unmoved,
And all unconscious of the joy 'tis giving;
All it hath felt, inflicted, passed, and proved,
Hushed into depths beyond the watcher's diving:

CANTO THE SECOND

There lies the thing we love with all its errors
And all its charms—like Death without its terrors.

CXCVIII

The Lady watched her lover—and that hour
Of Love's, and Night's, and Ocean's solitude,
O'erflowed her soul with their united power,
Amidst the barren sand and rocks so rude
She and her wave-worn love had made their bower,
Where nought upon their passion could intrude,
And all the stars that crowded the blue space
Saw nothing happier than her glowing face.

CXCIX

Alas! the love of Women! it is known
To be a lovely and a fearful thing,
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,
And if 'tis lost, Life hath no more to bring
To them but mockeries of the past alone,
And their revenge is as the tiger's spring,
Deadly, and quick, and crushing; yet, as real
Torture is theirs—what they inflict they feel.

CC

They are right; for Man, to man so oft unjust,
Is always so to Women one sole bond
Awaits them—treachery is all their trust;
Taught to conceal, their bursting hearts despond
Over their idol, till some wealthier lust
Buys them in marriage—and what rests beyond?
A thankless husband—next, a faithless lover—
Then dressing, nursing, praying—and all's over.

DON JUAN

CCI

Some take a lover, some take drams or prayers,
Some mind their household, others dissipation,
Some run away, and but exchange their cares,
Losing the advantage of a virtuous station,
Few changes e'er can better their affairs,
Theirs being an unnatural situation,
From the dull palace to the dirty hovel
Some play the devil, and then write a novel.

CCII

Haidée was Nature's bride, and knew not this;
Haidée was Passion's child, born where the Sun
Showers triple light, and scorches even the kiss
Of his gazelle-eyed daughters; she was one
Made but to love, to feel that she was his
Who was her chosen what was said or done
Elsewhere was nothing. She had nought to fear,
Hope, care, nor love, beyond,—her heart beat *here*.

CCIII

And oh! that quickening of the heart, that beat!
How much it costs us! yet each rising throb
Is in its cause as its effect so sweet,
That Wisdom, ever on the watch to rob
Joy of its alchemy, and to repeat
Fine truths; even Conscience, too, has a tough job
To make us understand each good old maxim,
So good—I wonder Castlereagh don't tax 'em.

CCIV

And now 'twas done—on the lone shore were plighted
Their hearts, the stars, their nuptial torches, shed

CANTO THE SECOND

Beauty upon the beautiful they lighted :

Ocean their witness, and the cave their bed,
By their own feelings hallowed and united,
Their priest was Solitude, and they were wed.
And they were happy—for to their young eyes
Each was an angel, and earth Paradise.

CCV

Oh, Love! of whom great Cæsar was the suitor,
Titus the master, Antony the slave,
Horace, Catullus, scholars, Ovid tutor,
Sappho the sage blue-stockings, in whose grave
All those may leap who rather would be neuter—
(Leucadia's rock still overlooks the wave)—
Oh, Love! thou art the very God of evil,
For, after all, we cannot call thee Devil.

CCVI

Thou mak'st the chaste connubial state precarious,
And jestest with the brows of mightiest men.
Cæsar and Pompey, Mahomet, Belisarius,
Have much employed the Muse of History's pen:
Their lives and fortunes were extremely various,
Such worthies Time will never see again;
Yet to these four in three things the same luck holds,
They all were heroes, conquerors, and cuckolds.

CCVII

Thou mak'st philosophers; there's Epicurus
And Aristippus, a material crew!
Who to immoral courses would allure us
By theories quite practicable too;
If only from the Devil they would insure us,
How pleasant were the maxim (not quite new),

DON JUAN

“Eat, drink, and love, what can the rest avail us?”
So said the royal sage Sardanapalus.

CCVIII

But Juan! had he quite forgotten Julia?
And should he have forgotten her so soon?
I can't but say it seems to me most truly a
Perplexing question, but, no doubt, the moon
Does these things for us, and whenever newly a
Strong palpitation rises, 'tis her boon,
Else how the devil is it that fresh features
Have such a charm for us poor human creatures?

CCIX

I hate inconstancy—I loathe, detest,
Abhor, condemn, abjure the mortal made
Of such quicksilver clay that in his breast
No permanent foundation can be laid,
Love, constant love, has been my constant guest,
And yet last night, being at a masquerade,
I saw the prettiest creature, fresh from Milan,
Which gave me some sensations like a villain.

CCX

But soon Philosophy came to my aid,
And whispered, “Think of every sacred tie!”
“I will, my dear Philosophy!” I said,
“But then her teeth, and then, oh, Heaven! her eye!
I'll just inquire if she be wife or maid,
Or neither—out of curiosity.”
“Stop!” cried Philosophy, with air so Grecian,
(Though she was masqued then as a fair Venetian);

CANTO THE SECOND

CCXI

“Stop!” so I stopped.—But to return that which
Men call inconstancy is nothing more
Than admiration due where Nature’s rich
Profusion with young beauty covers o’er
Some favoured object; and as in the niche
A lovely statue we almost adore,
This sort of adoration of the real
Is but a heightening of the “beau idéal.”

CCXII

’Tis the perception of the Beautiful,
A fine extension of the faculties,
Platonic, universal, wonderful,
Drawn from the stars, and filtered through the skies,
Without which Life would be extremely dull;
In short, it is the use of our own eyes,
With one or two small senses added, just
To hint that flesh is formed of fiery dust

CCXIII

Yet ’tis a painful feeling, and unwilling,
For surely if we always could perceive
In the same object graces quite as killing
As when she rose upon us like an Eve,
’Twould save us many a heartache, many a shilling,
(For we must get them anyhow, or grieve),
Whereas if one sole lady pleased for ever,
How pleasant for the heart, as well as liver!

CCXIV

The Heart is like the sky, a part of Heaven,
But changes night and day, too, like the sky;

DON JUAN

Now o'er it clouds and thunder must be driven,
And Darkness and Destruction as on high
But when it hath been scorched, and pierced, and riven,
Its storms expire in water-drops, the eye
Pours forth at last the Heart's blood turned to tears,
Which make the English climate of our years.

CCXV

The liver is the lazaret of bile,
But very rarely executes its function,
For the first passion stays there such a while,
That all the rest creep in and form a junction,
Like knots of vipers on a dunghill's soil—
Rage, fear, hate, jealousy, revenge, compunction—
So that all mischiefs spring up from this entrail,
Like earthquakes from the hidden fire called "central "

CCXVI

In the meantime, without proceeding more
In this anatomy, I've finished now
Two hundred and odd stanzas as before,
That being about the number I'll allow
Each canto of the twelve, or twenty-four;
And, laying down my pen, I make my bow,
Leaving Don Juan and Haidée to plead
For them and theirs with all who deign to read

CANTO THE THIRD

I

HAIL, Muse! *et cetera* — We left Juan sleeping,
Pillowed upon a fair and happy breast,
And watched by eyes that never yet knew weeping,
And loved by a young heart, too deeply blest
To feel the poison through her spirit creeping,
Or know who rested there; a foe to rest,
Had soiled the current of her sinless years,
And turned her pure heart's purest blood to tears!

II

Oh, Love! what is it in this world of ours
Which makes it fatal to be loved? Ah why
With cypress branches hast thou wreathed thy bowers,
And made thy best interpreter a sigh?
As those who dote on odours pluck the flowers,
And place them on their breast—but place to die—
Thus the frail beings we would fondly cherish
Are laid within our bosoms but to perish.

III

In her first passion Woman loves her lover,
In all the others all she loves is Love,
Which grows a habit she can ne'er get over,
And fits her loosely—like an easy glove,
As you may find, whene'er you like to prove her:
One man alone at first her heart can move,
She then prefers him in the plural number,
Not finding that the additions much encumber.

IV

I know not if the fault be men's or theirs;
But one thing's pretty sure; a woman planted—

DON JUAN

(Unless at once she plunge for life in prayers) —

After a decent time must be gallanted;
Although, no doubt, her first of love affairs
Is that to which her heart is wholly granted,
Yet there are some, they say, who have had *none*,
But those who have ne'er end with only *one*

V

'Tis melancholy, and a fearful sign
Of human frailty, folly, also crime,
That Love and Marriage rarely can combine,
Although they both are born in the same clime,
Marriage from Love, like vinegar from wine —
A sad, sour, sober beverage — by Time
Is sharpened from its high celestial flavour
Down to a very homely household savour

VI

There's something of antipathy, as 't were,
Between their present and their future state,
A kind of flattery that's hardly fair
Is used until the truth arrives too late —
Yet what can people do, except despair?
The same things change their names at such a rate;
For instance — passion in a lover's glorious,
But in a husband is pronounced uxorious.

VII

Men grow ashamed of being so very fond,
They sometimes also get a little tired
(But that, of course, is rare), and then despond
The same things cannot always be admired,
Yet 'tis "so nominated in the bond,"
That both are tied till one shall have expired.

CANTO THE THIRD

Sad thought! to lose the spouse that was adorning
Our days, and put one's servants into mourning.

VIII

There's doubtless something in domestic doings
Which forms, in fact, true Love's antithesis;
Romances paint at full length people's wooings,
But only give a bust of marriages;
For no one cares for matrimonial cooings,
There's nothing wrong in a connubial kiss
Think you, if Laura had been Petrarch's wife,
He would have written sonnets all his life?

IX

All tragedies are finished by a death,
All comedies are ended by a marriage,
The future states of both are left to faith,
For authors fear description might disparage
The worlds to come of both, or fall beneath,
And then both worlds would punish their miscarriage;
So leaving each their priest and prayer-book ready,
They say no more of Death or of the Lady.

X

The only two that in my recollection,
Have sung of Heaven and Hell, or marriage, are
Dante and Milton, and of both the affection
Was hapless in their nuptials, for some bar
Of fault or temper ruined the connection
(Such things, in fact, it don't ask much to mar);
But Dante's Beatrice and Milton's Eve
Were not drawn from their spouses, you conceive.

DON JUAN

XI

Some persons say that Dante meant Theology
By Beatrice, and not a mistress—I,
Although my opinion may require apology,
Deem this a commentator's phantasy,
Unless indeed it was from his own knowledge he
Decided thus, and showed good reason why;
I think that Dante's more abstruse ecstasies
Meant to personify the Mathematics.

XII

Haidée and Juan were not married, but
The fault was theirs, not mine: it is not fair,
Chaste reader, then, in any way to put
The blame on me, unless you wish they were;
Then if you'd have them wedded, please to shut
The book which treats of this erroneous pair,
Before the consequences grow too awful,
'Tis dangerous to read of loves unlawful

XIII

Yet they were happy, —happy in the illicit
Indulgence of their innocent desires;
But more imprudent grown with every visit,
Haidée forgot the island was her Sire's;
When we have what we like 'tis hard to miss it,
At least in the beginning, ere one tires;
Thus she came often, not a moment losing,
Whilst her piratical papa was cruising.

XIV

Let not his mode of raising cash seem strange,
Although he fleeced the flags of every nation,

CANTO THE THIRD

For into a Prime Minister but change
His title, and 'tis nothing but taxation;
But he, more modest, took an humbler range
Of Life, and in an honest vocation
Pursued o'er the high seas his watery journey,
And merely practised as a sea-attorney.

XV

The good old gentleman had been detained
By winds and waves, and some important captures,
And, in the hope of more, at sea remained,
Although a squall or two had damped his raptures,
By swamping one of the prizes, he had chained
His prisoners, dividing them like chapters
In numbered lots; they all had cuffs and collars,
And averaged each from ten to a hundred dollars.

XVI

Some he disposed of off Cape Matapan,
Among his friends the Mainots, some he sold
To his Tunis correspondents, save one man
Tossed overboard unsaleable (being old),
The rest—save here and there some richer one,
Reserved for future ransom—in the hold
Were linked alike, as for the common people he
Had a large order from the Dey of Tripoli.

XVII

The merchandise was served in the same way,
Pieced out for different marts in the Levant,
Except some certain portions of the prey,
Light classic articles of female want,
French stuffs, lace, tweezers, toothpicks, a bidet,
Guitars and castanets from Alicant,

DON JUAN

All which selected from the spoil he gathers,
Robbed for his daughter by the best of fathers.

XVIII

A monkey, a Dutch mastiff, a mackaw,
Two parrots, with a Persian cat and kittens,
He chose from several animals he saw—
A terrier, too, which once had been a Briton's,
Who dying on the coast of Ithaca,
The peasants gave the poor dumb thing a pittance.
These to secure in this strong blowing weather,
He caged in one huge hamper all together.

XIX

Then, having settled his marine affairs,
Despatching single cruisers here and there,
His vessel having need of some repairs,
He shaped his course to where his daughter fair
Continued still her hospitable cares;
But that part of the coast being shoal and bare,
And rough with reefs which ran out many a mile,
His port lay on the other side o' the isle.

XX

And there he went ashore without delay,
Having no custom-house nor quarantine
To ask him awkward questions on the way,
About the time and place where he had been.
He left his ship to be hove down next day,
With orders to the people to careen,
So that all hands were busy beyond measure,
In getting out goods, ballast, guns, and treasure.

CANTO THE THIRD

XXI

Arriving at the summit of a hill
Which overlooked the white walls of his home,
He stopped. — What singular emotions fill
Their bosoms who have been induced to roam !
With fluttering doubts if all be well or ill—
With love for many, and with fears for some;
All feelings which o'erleap the years long lost,
And bring our hearts back to their starting-post.

XXII

The approach of home to husbands and to sires,
After long travelling by land or water,
Most naturally some small doubt inspires—
A female family's a serious matter,
(None trusts the sex more, or so much admires—
But they hate flattery, so I never flatter);
Wives in their husbands' absences grow subtler,
And daughters sometimes run off with the butler.

XXIII

An honest gentleman at his return
May not have the good fortune of Ulysses;
Not all lone matrons for their husbands mourn,
Or show the same dislike to suitors' kisses;
The odds are that he finds a handsome urn
To his memory—and two or three young misses
Born to some friend, who holds his wife and riches,
And that *his* Argus bites him by—the breeches.

XXIV

If single, probably his plighted Fair
Has in his absence wedded some rich miser;

DON JUAN

But all the better, for the happy pair
May quarrel, and, the lady growing wiser,
He may resume his amatory care
As *cavalier servente*, or despise her;
And that his sorrow may not be a dumb one,
Writes odes on the Inconstancy of Woman

XXV

And oh! ye gentlemen who have already
Some chaste *liaison* of the kind—I mean
An honest friendship with a married lady—
The only thing of this sort ever seen
To last—of all connections the most steady,
And the true Hymen, (the first 's but a screen)—
Yet, for all that, keep not too long away—
I've known the absent wronged four times a day

XXVI

Lambro, our sea-solicitor, who had
Much less experience of dry land than Ocean,
On seeing his own chimney-smoke, felt glad,
But not knowing metaphysics, had no notion
Of the true reason of his not being sad,
Or that of any other strong emotion;
He loved his child, and would have wept the loss of her,
But knew the cause no more than a philosopher

XXVII

He saw his white walls shining in the sun,
His garden trees all shadowy and green;
He heard his rivulet's light bubbling run,
The distant dog-bark; and perceived between
The umbrage of the wood, so cool and dun,
The moving figures, and the sparkling sheen

CANTO THE THIRD

Of arms (in the East all arm)—and various dyes
Of coloured garbs, as bright as butterflies.

XXVIII

And as the spot where they appear he nears,
 Surprised at these unwonted signs of idling,
He hears—alas! no music of the spheres,
 But an unhallowed, earthly sound of fiddling!
A melody which made him doubt his ears,
 The cause being past his guessing or unriddling;
A pipe, too, and a drum, and shortly after,
A most unoriental roar of laughter.

XXIX

And still more nearly to the place advancing,
 Descending rather quickly the declivity,
Through the waved branches o'er the greensward glancing:
 'Midst other indications of festivity,
Seeing a troop of his domestics dancing
 Like Dervises, who turn as on a pivot, he
Perceived it was the Pyrrhic dance so martial,
To which the Levantines are very partial.

XXX

And further on a troop of Grecian girls,
 The first and tallest her white kerchief waving,
Were strung together like a row of pearls,
 Linked hand in hand, and dancing; each too having
Down her white neck long floating auburn curls—
 (The least of which would set ten poets raving);
Their leader sang—and bounded to her song
With choral step and voice the virgin throng.

DON JUAN

XXXI

And here, assembled cross-legged round their trays,
Small social parties just begun to dine,
Pilaus and meats of all sorts met the gaze,
And flasks of Samian and of Chian wine,
And sherbet cooling in the porous vase,
Above them their dessert grew on its vine,—
The orange and pomegranate nodding o'er,
Dropped in their laps, scarce plucked, their mellow store

XXXII

A band of children, round a snow-white ram,
There wreath his venerable horns with flowers,
While peaceful as if still an unweaned lamb,
The patriarch of the flock all gently cowers
His sober head, majestically tame,
Or eats from out the palm, or playful lowers
His brow, as if in act to butt, and then
Yielding to their small hands, draws back again.

XXXIII

Their classical profiles, and glittering dresses,
Their large black eyes, and soft seraphic cheeks,
Crimson as cleft pomegranates, their long tresses,
The gesture which enchants, the eye that speaks,
The innocence which happy childhood blesses,
Made quite a picture of these little Greeks,
So that the philosophical beholder
Sighed for their sakes—that they should e'er grow older.

XXXIV

Afar, a dwarf buffoon stood telling tales
To a sedate grey circle of old smokers,

CANTO THE TH RD

Of secret treasures found in hidden vales,
Of wonderful replies from Arab jokers,
Of charms to make good gold and cure bad ails,
Of rocks bewitched that open to the knockers,
Of magic ladies who, by one sole act,
Transformed their lords to beasts (but that's a fact)

XXXV

Here was no lack of innocent diversion
For the imagination or the senses,
Song, dance, wine, music, stories from the Persian,
All pretty pastimes in which no offence is;
But Lambro saw all these things with aversion,
Perceiving in his absence such expenses,
Dreading that climax of all human ills,
The inflammation of his weekly bills.

XXXVI

Ah! what is man? what perils still environ
The happiest mortals even after dinner!
A day of gold from out an age of iron
Is all that Life allows the luckiest sinner;
Pleasure (whene'er she sings, at least) 's a Siren,
That lures, to flay alive, the young beginner;
Lambro's reception at his people's banquet
Was such as fire accords to a wet blanket.

XXXVII

He—being a man who seldom used a word
Too much, and wishing gladly to surprise
(In general he surprised men with the sword)
His daughter—had not sent before to advise
Of his arrival, so that no one stirred,
And long he paused to re-assure his eyes,

DON JUAN

In fact much more astonished than delighted,
To find so much good company invited.

XXXVIII

He did not know (alas! how men will lie)
That a report (especially the Greeks)
Avouched his death (such people never die),
And put his house in mourning several weeks, —
But now their eyes and also lips were dry;
The bloom, too, had returned to Haidée's cheeks;
Her tears, too; being returned into their fount,
She now kept house upon her own account.

XXXIX

Hence all this rice, meat, dancing, wine, and fiddling,
Which turned the isle into a place of pleasure,
The servants all were getting drunk or idling,
A life which made them happy beyond measure.
Her father's hospitality seemed middling,
Compared with what Haidée did with his treasure;
'Twas wonderful how things went on improving,
While she had not one hour to spare from loving.

XL

Perhaps you think, in stumbling on this feast,
He flew into a passion, and in fact
There was no mighty reason to be pleased;
Perhaps you prophesy some sudden act,
The whip, the rack, or dungeon at the least,
To teach his people to be more exact,
And that, proceeding at a very high rate,
He showed the royal *penchants* of a pirate.

CANTO THE THIRD

XLI

You're wrong. —He was the mildest mannered man
That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat;
With such true breeding of a gentleman,
You never could divine his real thought;
No courtier could, and scarcely woman can
Gird more deceit within a petticoat;
Pity he loved adventurous life's variety,
He was so great a loss to good society.

XLII

Advancing to the nearest dinner tray,
Tapping the shoulder of the nighest guest,
With a peculiar smile, which, by the way,
Boded no good, whatever it expressed,
He asked the meaning of this holiday;
The vinous Greek to whom he had addressed
His question, much too merry to divine
The questioner, filled up a glass of wine,

LXIII

And without turning his facetious head,
Over his shoulder, with a Bacchant air,
Presented the o'erflowing cup, and said,
"Talking's dry work, I have no time to spare"
A second hiccuped, "Our old Master's dead,
You'd better ask our Mistress who's his heir."
"Our Mistress!" quoth a third: "Our Mistress! —pooh! —
You mean our Master —not the old, but new."

XLIV

These rascals, being new comers, knew not whom
They thus addressed —and Lambro's visage fell —

DON JUAN

And o'er his eye a momentary gloom
Passed, but he strove quite courteously to quell
The expression, and endeavouring to resume
His smile, requested one of them to tell
The name and quality of his new patron,
Who seemed to have turned Haidée into a matron.

XLV

“I know not,” quoth the fellow, “who or what
He is, nor whence he came—and little care;
But this I know, that this roast capon's fat,
And that good wine ne'er washed down better fare,
And if you are not satisfied with that,
Direct your questions to my neighbour there;
He'll answer all for better or for worse,
For none likes more to hear himself converse.”

XLVI

I said that Lambro was a man of patience,
And certainly he showed the best of breeding,
Which scarce even France, the Paragon of nations,
E'er saw her most polite of sons exceeding,
He bore these sneers against his near relations,
His own anxiety, his heart, too, bleeding,
The insults, too, of every servile glutton,
Who all the time was eating up his mutton.

XLVII

Now in person used to much command—
To bid men come, and go, and come again—
To see his orders done, too, out of hand—
Whether the word was death, or but the chain—
It may seem strange to find his manners bland,
Yet such things are, which I cannot explain,

CANTO THE THIRD

Though doubtless, he who can command himself
Is good to govern—almost as a Guelf.

XLVIII

Not that he was not sometimes rash or so,
But never in his real and serious mood;
Then calm, concentrated, and still, and slow,
He lay coiled like the Boa in the wood;
With him it never was a word and blow,
His angry word once o'er, he shed no blood,
But in his silence there was much to rue,
And his *one* blow left little work for *two*.

XLIX

He asked no further questions, and proceeded
On to the house, but by a private way,
So that the few who met him hardly heeded,
So little they expected him that day,
If love paternal in his bosom pleaded
For Haidée's sake, is more than I can say,
But certainly to one deemed dead returning,
This revel seemed a curious mode of mourning.

L

If all the dead could now return to life,
(Which God forbid!) or some, or a great many,
For instance, if a husband or his wife
(Nuptial examples are as good as any),
No doubt whate'er might be their former strife,
The present weather would be much more rainy—
Tears shed into the grave of the connection
Would share most probably its resurrection.

DON JUAN

LI

He entered in the house no more his home,
A thing to human feelings the most trying,
And harder for the heart to overcome,
Perhaps, than even the mental pangs of dying;
To find our hearthstone turned into a tomb,
And round its once warm precincts palely lying
The ashes of our hopes, is a deep grief,
Beyond a single gentleman's belief

LII

He entered in the house—his home no more,
For without hearts there is no home;—and felt
The solitude of passing his own door
Without a welcome: *there* he long had dwelt,
There his few peaceful days Time had swept o'er,
There his worn bosom and keen eye would melt
Over the innocence of that sweet child,
His only shrine of feelings undefiled.

LIII

He was a man of a strange temperament,
Of mild demeanour though of savage mood,
Moderate in all his habits, and content
With temperance in pleasure, as in food,
Quick to perceive, and strong to bear, and meant
For something better, if not wholly good,
His Country's wrongs and his despair to save her
Had stung him from a slave to an enslaver.

LIV

The love of power, and rapid gain of gold,
The hardness by long habitude produced,

CANTO THE THIRD

The dangerous life in which he had grown old,
The mercy he had granted oft abused,
The sights he was accustomed to behold,
The wild seas, and wild men with whom he cruised,
Had cost his enemies a long repentance,
And made him a good friend, but bad acquaintance.

LV

But something of the spirit of old Greece
Flashed o'er his soul a few heroic rays,
Such as lit onward to the Golden Fleece
His predecessors in the Colchian days,
'Tis true he had no ardent love for peace—
Alas! his country showed no path to praise:
Hate to the world and war with every nation
He waged, in vengeance of her degradation.

LVI

Still o'er his mind the influence of the clime
Shed its Ionian elegance, which showed
Its power unconsciously full many a time,—
A taste seen in the choice of his abode,
A love of music and of scenes sublime,
A pleasure in the gentle stream that flowed
Past him in crystal, and a joy in flowers,
Bedewed his spirit in his calmer hours

LVII

But whatsoe'er he had of love reposed
On that belovéd daughter; she had been
The only thing which kept his heart unclosed
Amidst the savage deeds he had done and seen,
A lonely pure affection unopposed:
There wanted but the loss of this to wean

DON JUAN

His feelings from all milk of human kindness,
And turn him like the Cyclops mad with blindness.

LVIII

The cubless tigress in her jungle raging
Is dreadful to the shepherd and the flock;
The Ocean when its yeasty war is waging
Is awful to the vessel near the rock,
But violent things will sooner bear assuaging,
Their fury being spent by its own shock,
Than the stern, single, deep, and wordless ire
Of a strong human heart, and in a Sire

LIX

It is a hard although a common case
To find our children running restive—they
In whom our brightest days we would retrace,
Our little selves re-formed in finer clay,
Just as old age is creeping on apace,
And clouds come o'er the sunset of our day,
They kindly leave us, though not quite alone,
But in good company—the gout or stone

LX

Yet a fine family is a fine thing
(Provided they don't come in after dinner),
'Tis beautiful to see a matron bring
Her children up (if nursing them don't thin her),
Like cherubs round an altar-piece they cling
To the fire-side (a sight to touch a sinner)
A lady with her daughters or her nieces
Shine like a guinea and seven-shilling pieces.

CANTO THE THIRD

LXI

Old Lambro passed unseen a private gate,
And stood within his hall at eventide;
Meantime the lady and her lover sate
At wassail in their beauty and their pride.
An ivory inlaid table spread with state
Before them, and fair slaves on every side;
Gems, gold, and silver, formed the service mostly,
Mother of pearl and coral the less costly.

LXII

The dinner made about a hundred dishes;
Lamb and pistachio nuts—in short, all meats,
And saffron soups, and sweetbreads; and the fishes
Were of the finest that e'er flounced in nets,
Dressed to a Sybarite's most pampered wishes;
The beverage was various sherbets
Of raisin, orange, and pomegranate juice,
Squeezed through the rind, which makes it best for use

LXIII

These were ranged round, each in its crystal ewer,
And fruits, and date-bread loaves closed the repast,
And Mocha's berry, from Arabia pure,
In small fine China cups, came in at last;
Gold cups of filigree, made to secure
The hand from burning, underneath them placed,
Cloves, cinnamon, and saffron too were boiled
Up with the coffee, which (I think) they spoiled

LXIV

The hangings of the room were tapestry, made
Of velvet panels, each of different hue,

DON JUAN

And thick with damask flowers of silk inlaid;
And round them ran a yellow border too,
The upper border, richly wrought, displayed,
Embroidered delicately o'er with blue,
Soft Persian sentences, in lilac letters,
From poets, or the moralists their betters.

LXV

These Oriental writings on the wall,
Quite common in those countries, are a kind
Of monitors adapted to recall,
Like skulls at Memphian banquets, to the mind,
The words which shook Belshazzar in his hall,
And took his kingdom from him: You will find,
Though sages may pour out their wisdom's treasure,
There is no sterner moralist than Pleasure

LXVI

A Beauty at the season's close grown hectic,
A Genius who has drunk himself to death,
A Rake turned methodistic, or Eclectic—
(For that's the name they like to pray beneath)—
But most, an Alderman struck apoplectic,
Are things that really take away the breath,—
And show that late hours, wine, and love are able
To do not much less damage than the table

LXVII

Haidée and Juan carpeted their feet
On crimson satin, bordered with pale blue;
Their sofa occupied three parts complete
Of the apartment—and appeared quite new,
The velvet cushions (for a throne more meet)
Were scarlet, from whose glowing centre grew

CANTO THE THIRD

A sun embossed in gold, whose rays of tissue,
Meridian-like, were seen all light to issue.

LXVIII

Crystal and marble, plate and porcelain,
Had done their work of splendour; Indian mats
And Persian carpets, which the heart bled to stain,
Over the floors were spread; gazelles and cats,
And dwarfs and blacks, and such like things, that gain
Their bread as ministers and favourites (that's
To say, by degradation) mingled there
As plentiful as in a court, or fair.

LXIX

There was no want of lofty mirrors, and
The tables, most of ebony inlaid
With mother of pearl or ivory, stood at hand,
Or were of tortoise-shell or rare woods made,
Fretted with gold or silver —by command
The greater part of these were ready spread
With viands and sherbets in ice—and wine—
Kept for all comers at all hours to dine.

LXX

Of all the dresses I select Haidée's;
She wore two jelicks—one was of pale yellow,
Of azure, pink, and white was her chemise—
'Neath which her breast heaved like a little billow.
With buttons formed of pearls as large as peas,
All gold and crimson shone her jelick's fellow,
And the striped white gauze baracan that bound her,
Like fleecy clouds about the moon, flowed round her.

DON JUAN

LXXI

One large gold bracelet clasped each lovely arm,
Lockless—so pliable from the pure gold
That the hand stretched and shut it without harm,
The limb which it adorned its only mould;
So beautiful—its very shape would charm,
And clinging, as if loath to lose its hold,
The purest ore enclosed the whitest skin
That e'er by precious metal was held in.

LXXII

Around, as Princess of her father's land,
A like gold bar above her instep rolled
Announced her rank; twelve rings were on her hand,
Her hair was starred with gems, her veil's fine fold
Below her breast was fastened with a band
Of lavish pearls, whose worth could scarce be told,
Her orange silk full Turkish trousers furled
About the prettiest ankle in the world.

LXXIII

Her hair's long auburn waves down to her heel
Flowed like an Alpine torrent which the sun
Dyes with his morning light, —and would conceal
Her person if allowed at large to run,
And still they seemed resentfully to feel
The silken fillet's curb, and sought to shun
Their bonds whene'er some Zephyr caught began
To offer his young pinion as her fan

LXXIV

Round her she made an atmosphere of life,
The very air seemed lighter from her eyes,

CANTO THE THIRD

They were so soft and beautiful, and rife
With all we can imagine of the skies,
And pure as Psyche ere she grew a wife—
Too pure even for the purest human ties,
Her overpowering presence made you feel
It would not be idolatry to kneel.

LXXV

Her eyelashes, though dark as night, were tinged
(It is the country's custom, but in vain),
For those large black eyes were so blackly fringed,
The glossy rebels mocked the jetty stain,
And in their native beauty stood avenged:
Her nails were touched with henna, but, again,
The power of Art was turned to nothing, for
They could not look more rosy than before

LXXVI

The henna should be deeply dyed to make
The skin relieved appear more fairly fair,
She had no need of this, day ne'er will break
On mountain tops more heavenly white than her:
The eye might doubt if it were well awake,
She was so like a vision, I might err,
But Shakespeare also says, 'tis very silly
"To gild refinéd gold, or paint the lily."

LXXVII

Juan had on a shawl of black and gold,
But a white baracan, and so transparent
The sparkling gems beneath you might behold,
Like small stars through the milky way apparent,
His turban, furled in many a graceful fold,
An emerald aigrette, with Haidée's hair in't,

DON JUAN

Surmounted, as its clasp, a glowing crescent,
Whose rays shone ever trembling, but incessant.

LXXVIII

And now they were diverted by their suite,
Dwarfs, dancing girls, black eunuchs, and a poet,
Which made their new establishment complete;
The last was of great fame, and liked to show it;
His verses rarely wanted their due feet—
And for his theme—he seldom sung below it,
He being paid to satirise or flatter,
As the Psalm says, “inditing a good matter.”

LXXIX

He praised the present, and abused the past,
Reversing the good custom of old days,
An Eastern anti-jacobin at last
He turned, preferring pudding to *no* praise—
For some few years his lot had been o’ercast
By his seeming independent in his lays,
But now he sung the Sultan and the Pacha—
With truth like Southey, and with verse like Crashaw.

LXXX

He was a man who had seen many changes,
And always changed as true as any needle;
His Polar Star being one which rather ranges,
And not the fixed—he knew the way to wheedle
So vile he ’scaped the doom which oft avenges;
And being fluent (save indeed when fee’d ill),
He lied with such a fervour of intention—
There was no doubt he earned his laureate pension.

CANTO THE THIRD

LXXXI

But *he* had genius, —when a turncoat has it,
The *Vates irritabilis* takes care
That without notice few full moons shall pass it;
Even good men like to make the public stare:—
But to my subject—let me see—what was it?—
Oh! —the third canto—and the pretty pair—
Their loves, and feasts, and house, and dress, and mode
Of living in their insular abode.

LXXXII

Their poet, a sad trimmer, but, no less,
In company a very pleasant fellow,
Had been the favourite of full many a mess
Of men, and made them speeches when half mellow;
And though his meaning they could rarely guess,
Yet still they deigned to hiccup or to bellow
The glorious meed of popular applause,
Of which the first ne'er knows the second cause.

LXXXIII

But now being lifted into high society,
And having picked up several odds and ends
Of free thoughts in his travels for variety,
He deemed, being in a lone isle, among friends,
That, without any danger of a riot, he
Might for long lying make himself amends;
And, singing as he sung in his warm youth,
Agree to a short armistice with Truth

DON JUAN

LXXXIV

He had travelled 'mongst the Arabs, Turks, and Franks,
And knew the self-loves of the different nations,
And having lived with people of all ranks,
Had something ready upon most occasions—
Which got him a few presents and some thanks
He varied with some skill his adulations;
To "do at Rome as Romans do," a piece
Of conduct was which he observed in Greece.

LXXXV

Thus, usually, when he was asked to sing,
He gave the different nations something national,
'Twas all the same to him—"God save the King,"
Or "Ça ira," according to the fashion all
His Muse made increment of anything,
From the high lyric down to the low rational,
If Pindar sang horse-races, what should hinder
Himself from being as pliable as Pindar?

LXXXVI

In France, for instance, he would write a chanson;
In England a six canto quarto tale;
In Spain he'd make a ballad or romance on
The last war—much the same in Portugal,
In Germany, the Pegasus he'd prance on
Would be old Goethe's—(see what says De Staël);
In Italy he'd ape the "Trecentisti";
In Greece, he'd sing some sort of hymn like this t'ye:

CANTO THE THIRD

I

The Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece !
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung !
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set

2

The Scian and the Teian muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse.
Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' "Islands of the Blest."

3

The mountains look on Marathon—
And Marathon looks on the sea,
And musing there an hour alone,
I dreamed that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave

4

A King sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations,—all were his !
He counted them at break of day—
And, when the sun set, where were they ?

DON JUAN

5

And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now—
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

6

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
Though linked among a fettered race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face,
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

7

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest?
Must *we* but blush?—Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ!

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no;—the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, "Let one living head,
But one arise,—we come, we come!"
'Tis but the living who are dumb

CANTO THE THIRD

9

In vain—in vain: strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
Hark! rising to the ignoble call—
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

10

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet,
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave—
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

11

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine.
He served—but served Polycrates—
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

12

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was Freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

DON JUAN

13

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine !
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore,
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

14

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
They have a king who buys and sells,
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells;
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad

15

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine !
Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
I see their glorious black eyes shine,
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

16

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep,
There, swan-like, let me sing and die
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine !

CANTO THE THIRD

LXXXVII

Thus sung, or would, or could, or should have sung,
The modern Greek, in tolerable verse;
If not like Orpheus quite, when Greece was young,
Yet in these times he might have done much worse
His strain displayed some feeling—right or wrong;
And feeling, in a poet, is the source
Of others' feeling; but they are such liars,
And take all colours—like the hands of dyers

LXXXVIII

But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think;
'Tis strange, the shortest letter which man uses
Instead of speech, may form a lasting link
Of ages; to what straits old Time reduces
Frail man, when paper—even a rag like this,
Survives himself, his tomb, and all that's his!

LXXXIX

And when his bones are dust, his grave a blank,
His station, generation, even his nation,
Become a thing, or nothing, save to rank
In chronological commemoration,
Some dull MS. Oblivion long has sank,
Or graven stone found in a barrack's station
In digging the foundation of a closet,
May turn his name up, as a rare deposit.

XC

And Glory long has made the sages smile,
'Tis something, nothing, words, illusion, wind—

DON JUAN

Depending more upon the historian's style
Than on the name a person leaves behind
Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to Hoyle
The present century was growing blind
To the great Marlborough's skill in giving knocks,
Until his late Life by Archdeacon Coxe.

XC I

Milton's the Prince of poets—so we say;
A little heavy, but no less divine:
An independent being in his day—
Learned, pious, temperate in love and wine;
But, his life falling into Johnson's way,
We're told this great High Priest of all the Nine
Was whipped at college—a harsh sire—odd spouse,
For the first Mrs Milton left his house.

XC II

All these are, *certainly*, entertaining facts,
Like Shakespeare's stealing deer, Lord Bacon's bribes;
Like Titus' youth, and Cæsar's earliest acts,
Like Burns (whom Doctor Currie well describes),
Like Cromwell's pranks,—but although Truth exacts
These amiable descriptions from the scribes,
As most essential to their hero's story,
They do not much contribute to his glory.

XC III

All are not moralists, like Southey, when
He prated to the world of "Pantisocracy";
Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who then
Seasoned his pedlar poems with Democracy;
Or Coleridge long before his flighty pen
Let to the *Morning Post* its aristocracy,

CANTO THE THIRD

When he and Southey, following the same path,
Espoused two partners (milliners of Bath).

XCIV

Such names at present cut a convict figure,
The very Botany Bay in moral geography;
Their loyal treason, renegado rigour,
Are good manure for their more bare biography.
Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way, is bigger
Than any since the birthday of typography;
A drowsy, frowzy poem, called the "Excursion,"
Writ in a manner which is my aversion.

XCV

He there builds up a formidable dyke
Between his own and others' intellect;
But Wordsworth's poem, and his followers, like
Joanna Southcote's Shiloh and her sect,
Are things which in this century don't strike
The public mind, — so few are the elect;
And the new births of both their stale virginities
Have proved but dropsies, taken for divinities

XCVI

But let me to my story. I must own,
If I have any fault, it is digression,
Leaving my people to proceed alone,
While I soliloquise beyond expression,
But these are my addresses from the throne,
Which put off business to the ensuing session —
Forgetting each omission is a loss to
The world, not quite so great as Ariosto

DON JUAN

XCVII

I know that what our neighbours call "*longueurs*,"
(We've not so good a *word*, but have the *thing*,
In that complete perfection which insures
An epic from Bob Southey every spring) —
Form not the true temptation which allures
The reader; but 'twould not be hard to bring
Some fine examples of the *épopée*,
To prove its grand ingredient is *ennui*.

XCVIII

We learn from Horace, "Homer sometimes sleeps";
We feel without him, — Wordsworth sometimes wakes,
To show with what complacency he creeps,
With his dear "*Waggoners*," around his lakes.
He wishes for "a boat" to sail the deeps —
Of Ocean? — No, of air; and then he makes
Another outcry for "a little boat,"
And drivels seas to set it well afloat.

XCIX

If he must fain sweep o'er the ethereal plain,
And Pegasus runs restive in his "*Waggon*,"
Could he not beg the loan of Charles's Wain?
Or pray Medea for a single dragon?
Or if, too classic for his vulgar brain,
He feared his neck to venture such a nag on,
And he must needs mount nearer to the moon,
Could not the blockhead ask for a balloon?

C

"Pedlars," and "Boats," and "Waggoners"! Oh! ye shades
Of Pope and Dryden, are we come to this?

CANTO THE THIRD

That trash of such sort not alone evades
Contempt, but from the bathos' vast abyss
Floats scumlike uppermost, and these Jack Cades
Of sense and song above your graves may hiss—
The "little boatman" and his "Peter Bell"
Can sneer at him who drew "Achitophel"!

CI

T' our tale. — The feast was over, the slaves gone,
The dwarfs and dancing girls had all retired;
The Arab lore and Poet's song were done,
And every sound of revelry expired;
The lady and her lover, left alone,
The rosy flood of twilight sky admired;—
Ave Maria! o'er the earth and sea,
That heavenliest hour of Heaven is worthiest thee!

CII

Ave Maria! blessed be the hour!
The time, the clime, the spot, where I so oft
Have felt that moment in its fullest power
Sink o'er the earth—so beautiful and soft—
While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,
Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seemed stirred with prayer

CIII

Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of prayer!
Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of Love!
Ave Maria! may our spirits dare
Look up to thine and to thy Son's above!
Ave Maria! oh that face so fair!
Those downcast eyes beneath the Almighty Dove!

DON JUAN

What though 'tis but a pictured image strike,
That painting is no idol,—'tis too like.

CIV

Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,
In nameless print—that I have no devotion,
But set those persons down with me to pray,
And you shall see who has the properest notion
Of getting into Heaven the shortest way;
My altars are the mountains and the Ocean,
Earth—air—stars,—all that springs from the great Whole,
Who hath produced, and will receive the Soul.

CV

Sweet Hour of Twilight!—in the solitude
Of the pine forest, and the silent shore
Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial wood,
Rooted where once the Adrian wave flowed o'er,
To where the last Cæsarean fortress stood,
Evergreen forest! which Boccaccio's lore
And Dryden's lay made haunted ground to me,
How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!

CVI

The shrill cicadas, people of the pine,
Making their summer lives one ceaseless song,
Were the sole echoes, save my steed's and mine,
And Vesper bell's that rose the boughs along,
The spectre huntsman of Onesti's line,
His hell-dogs, and their chase, and the fair throng
Which learned from this example not to fly
From a true lover,—shadowed my mind's eye

CANTO THE THIRD

CVII

Oh, Hesperus! thou bringest all good things—
Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,
To the young bird the parent's brooding wings;
The welcome stall to the o'erlaboured steer;
Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone clings,
Whate'er our household gods protect of dear,
Are gathered round us by thy look of rest;
Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's breast.

CVIII

Soft Hour! which wakes the wish and melts the heart
Of those who sail the seas, on the first day
When they from their sweet friends are torn apart;
Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way
As the far bell of Vesper makes him start,
Seeming to weep the dying day's decay;
Is this a fancy which our reason scorns?
Ah! surely Nothing dies but Something mourns!

CIX

When Nero perished by the justest doom
Which ever the destroyer yet destroyed,
Amidst the roar of liberated Rome,
Of nations freed, and the world overjoyed,
Some hands unseen strewed flowers upon his tomb:
Perhaps the weakness of a heart not void
Of feeling for some kindness done, when power
Had left the wretch an uncorrupted hour.

CX

But I'm digressing; what on earth has Nero,
Or any such like sovereign buffoons,

DON JUAN

To do with the transactions of my hero,
More than such madmen's fellow man—the moon's?
Sure my invention must be down at zero,
And I grown one of many “Wooden Spoons”
Of verse (the name with which we Cantabs please
To dub the last of honours in degrees).

CXI

I feel this tediousness will never do—
’Tis being *too* epic, and I must cut down
(In copying) this long canto into two;
They’ll never find it out, unless I own
The fact, excepting some experienced few;
And then as an improvement ’twill be shown:
I’ll prove that such the opinion of the critic is
From Aristotle *passim* —See ΠΟΙΗΤΙΚΗΣ.

CANTO THE FOURTH

I

NOTHING so difficult as a beginning
In poesy, unless perhaps the end,
For oftentimes when Pegasus seems winning
The race, he sprains a wing, and down we tend,
Like Lucifer when hurled from Heaven for sinning;
Our sin the same, and hard as his to mend,
Being Pride, which leads the mind to soar too far,
Till our own weakness shows us what we are.

II

But Time, which brings all beings to their level,
And sharp Adversity, will teach at last
Man, —and, as we would hope, —perhaps the Devil,
That neither of their intellects are vast
While Youth's hot wishes in our red veins revel,
We know not this—the blood flows on too fast;
But as the torrent widens towards the Ocean,
We ponder deeply on each past emotion.

III

As boy, I thought myself a clever fellow,
And wished that others held the same opinion;
They took it up when my days grew more mellow,
And other minds acknowledged my dominion:
Now my sere Fancy “falls into the yellow
Leaf,” and Imagination droops her pinion,
And the sad truth which hovers o'er my desk
Turns what was once romantic to burlesque

IV

And if I laugh at any mortal thing,
'Tis that I may not weep; and if I weep,

DON JUAN

'Tis that our nature cannot always bring
Itself to apathy, for we must steep
Our hearts first in the depths of Lethe's spring,
Ere what we least wish to behold will sleep
Thetis baptized her mortal son in Styx,
A mortal mother would on Lethe fix

V

Some have accused me of a strange design
Against the creed and morals of the land,
And trace it in this poem every line:
I don't pretend that I quite understand
My own meaning when I would be *very* fine,
But the fact is that I have nothing planned,
Unless it were to be a moment merry—
A novel word in my vocabulary.

VI

To the kind reader of our sober clime
This way of writing will appear exotic;
Pulci was sire of the half-serious rhyme,
Who sang when Chivalry was more quixotic,
And revelled in the fancies of the time,
True Knights, chaste Dames, huge Giants, Kings despotic;
But all these, save the last, being obsolete,
I chose a modern subject as more meet

VII

How I have treated it, I do not know;
Perhaps no better than they have treated me,
Who have imputed such designs as show
Not what they saw, but what they wished to see
But if it gives them pleasure, be it so;
This is a liberal age, and thoughts are free:

CANTO THE FOURTH

Meantime Apollo plucks me by the ear,
And tells me to resume my story here

VIII

Young Juan and his lady-love were left
To their own hearts' most sweet society,
Even Time the pitiless in sorrow cleft
With his rude scythe such gentle bosoms, he
Sighed to behold them of their hours bereft,
Though foe to Love, and yet they could not be
Meant to grow old, but die in happy Spring,
Before one charm or hope had taken wing

IX

Their faces were not made for wrinkles, their
Pure blood to stagnate, their great hearts to fail;
The blank grey was not made to blast their hair,
But like the climes that know nor snow nor hail,
They were all summer—lightning might assail
And shiver them to ashes, but to trail
A long and snake-like life of dull decay
Was not for them—they had too little clay.

X

They were alone once more, for them to be
Thus was another Eden, they were never
Weary, unless when separate the tree
Cut from its forest root of years—the river
Dammed from its fountain—the child from the knee
And breast maternal weaned at once for ever,
Would wither less than these two torn apart,
Alas! there is no instinct like the Heart—

DON JUAN

XI

The Heart—which may be broken: happy they!
Thrice fortunate! who of that fragile mould,
The precious porcelain of human clay,
Break with the first fall: they can ne'er behold
The long year linked with heavy day on day,
And all which must be borne, and never told,
While Life's strange principle will often lie
Deepest in those who long the most to die.

XII

“Whom the gods love die young,” was said of yore,
And many deaths do they escape by this
The death of friends, and that which slays even more—
The death of Friendship, Love, Youth, all that is,
Except mere breath, and since the silent shore
Awaits at last even those whom longest miss
The old Archer's shafts, perhaps the early grave
Which men weep over may be meant to save.

XIII

Haidée and Juan thought not of the dead—
The Heavens, and Earth, and Air, seemed made for them:
They found no fault with Time, save that he fled;
They saw not in themselves aught to condemn.
Each was the other's mirror, and but read
Joy sparkling in their dark eyes like a gem,
And knew such brightness was but the reflection
Of their exchanging glances of affection

XIV

The gentle pressure, and the thrilling touch,
The least glance better understood than words,

CANTO THE FOURTH

Which still said all, and ne'er could say too much,
A language, too, but like to that of birds,
Known but to them, at least appearing such
As but to lovers a true sense affords;
Sweet playful phrases, which would seem absurd
To those who have ceased to hear such, or ne'er heard.

XV

All these were theirs, for they were children still,
And children still they should have ever been,
They were not made in the real world to fill
A busy character in the dull scene,
But like two beings born from out a rill,
A Nymph and her belovéd, all unseen
To pass their lives in fountains and on flowers,
And never know the weight of human hours.

XVI

Moons changing had rolled on, and changeless found
Those their bright rise had lighted to such joys
As rarely they beheld throughout their round;
And these were not of the vain kind which cloy,
For theirs were buoyant spirits, never bound
By the mere senses; and that which destroys
Most love—possession—unto them appeared
A thing which each endearment more endeared.

XVII

Oh beautiful! and rare as beautiful!
But theirs was Love in which the Mind delights
To lose itself, when the old world grows dull,
And we are sick of its hack sounds and sights,
Intrigues, adventures of the common school,
Its petty passions, marriages, and flights,

DON JUAN

Where Hymen's torch but brands one strumpet more,
Whose husband only knows her not a whore

XVIII

Hard words—harsh truth! a truth which many know
Enough — The faithful and the fairy pair,
Who never found a single hour too slow,
What was it made them thus exempt from care?
Young innate feelings all have felt below,
Which perish in the rest, but in them were
Inherent—what we mortals call romantic,
And always envy, though we deem it frantic

XIX

This is in others a factitious state,
An opium dream of too much youth and reading,
But was in them their nature or their fate:
No novels e'er had set their young hearts bleeding,
For Haidée's knowledge was by no means great,
And Juan was a boy of saintly breeding,
So that there was no reason for their loves
More than for those of nightingales or doves

XX

They gazed upon the sunset; 'tis an hour
Dear unto all, but dearest to *their* eyes,
For it had made them what they were: the power
Of Love had first o'erwhelmed them from such skies,
When Happiness had been their only dower,
And Twilight saw them linked in Passion's ties,
Charmed with each other, all things charmed that brought
The past still welcome as the present thought

CANTO THE FOURTH

XXI

I know not why, but in that hour to-night,
Even as they gazed, a sudden tremor came,
And swept, as 'twere, across their hearts' delight,
Like the wind o'er a harp-string, or a flame,
When one is shook in sound, and one in sight;
And thus some boding flashed through either frame,
And called from Juan's breast a faint low sigh,
While one new tear arose in Haidée's eye.

XXII

That large black prophet eye seemed to dilate
And follow far the disappearing sun,
As if their last day of a happy date
With his broad, bright, and dropping orb were gone;
Juan gazed on her as to ask his fate—
He felt a grief, but knowing cause for none,
His glance inquired of hers for some excuse
For feelings causeless, or at least abstruse.

XXIII

She turned to him, and smiled, but in that sort
Which makes not others smile, then turned aside
Whatever feeling shook her, it seemed short,
And mastered by her wisdom or her pride;
When Juan spoke, too—it might be in sport—
Of this their mutual feeling, she replied—
“If it should be so,—but—it cannot be—
Or I at least shall not survive to see”

XXIV

Juan would question further, but she pressed
His lip to hers, and silenced him with this,

DON JUAN

And then dismissed the omen from her breast,
Defying augury with that fond kiss;
And no doubt of all methods 'tis the best
Some people prefer wine—'tis not amiss,
I have tried both—so those who would a part take
May choose between the headache and the heartache

XXV

One of the two, according to your choice,
Woman or wine, you'll have to undergo,
Both maladies are taxes on our joys.
But which to choose, I really hardly know;
And if I had to give a casting voice,
For both sides I could many reasons show,
And then decide, without great wrong to either,
It were much better to have both than neither.

XXVI

Juan and Haidée gazed upon each other
With swimming looks of speechless tenderness,
Which mixed all feelings—friend, child, lover, brother—
All that the best can mingle and express
When two pure hearts are poured in one another,
And love too much, and yet can not love less,
But almost sanctify the sweet excess
By the immortal wish and power to bless.

XXVII

Mixed in each other's arms, and heart in heart,
Why did they not then die?—they had lived too long
Should an hour come to bid them breathe apart,
Years could but bring them cruel things or wrong;
The World was not for them—nor the World's art
For beings passionate as Sappho's song;

CANTO THE FOURTH

Love was born *with* them, *in* them, so intense,
It was their very spirit—not a sense.

XXVIII

They should have lived together deep in woods,
Unseen as sings the nightingale; they were
Unfit to mix in these thick solitudes
Called social, haunts of Hate, and Vice, and Care.
How lonely every freeborn creature broods!
The sweetest song-birds nestle in a pair;
The eagle soars alone; the gull and crow
Flock o'er their carrion, just like men below.

XXIX

Now pillowed cheek to cheek, in loving sleep,
Haidée and Juan their siesta took,
A gentle slumber, but it was not deep,
For ever and anon a something shook
Juan, and shuddering o'er his frame would creep;
And Haidée's sweet lips murmured like a brook
A wordless music, and her face so fair
Stirred with her dream, as rose-leaves with the air.

XXX

Or as the stirring of a deep clear stream
Within an Alpine hollow, when the wind
Walks o'er it, was she shaken by the dream,
The mystical usurper of the mind—
O'erpowering us to be whate'er may seem
Good to the soul which we no more can bind,
Strange state of being! (for 'tis still to be)
Senseless to feel, and with sealed eyes to see.

DON JUAN

XXXI

She dreamed of being alone on the sea-shore,
Chained to a rock, she knew not how, but stir
She could not from the spot, and the loud roar
Grew, and each wave rose roughly, threatening her;
And o'er her upper lip they seemed to pour,
Until she sobbed for breath, and soon they were
Foaming o'er her lone head, so fierce and high—
Each broke to drown her, yet she could not die

XXXII

Anon—she was released, and then she strayed
O'er the sharp shingles with her bleeding feet,
And stumbled almost every step she made,
And something rolled before her in a sheet,
Which she must still pursue howe'er afraid,
'Twas white and indistinct, nor stopped to meet
Her glance nor grasp, for still she gazed and grasped,
And ran, but it escaped her as she clasped

XXXIII

The dream changed—in a cave she stood,—its walls
Were hung with marble icicles; the work
Of ages on its water-fretted halls,
Where waves might wash, and seals might breed and lurk
Her hair was dripping, and the very balls
Of her black eyes seemed turned to tears, and mirk
The sharp rocks looked below each drop they caught,
Which froze to marble as it fell,—she thought

XXXIV

And wet, and cold, and lifeless at her feet,
Pale as the foam that frothed on his dead brow,

CANTO THE FOURTH

Which she essayed in vain to clear, (how sweet
Were once her cares, how idle seemed they now !)
Lay Juan, nor could aught renew the beat
Of his quenched heart: and the sea dirges low
Rang in her sad ears like a Mermaid's song,
And that brief dream appeared a life too long.

XXXV

And gazing on the dead, she thought his face
Faded, or altered into something new—
Like to her father's features, till each trace
More like and like to Lambro's aspect grew—
With all his keen worn look and Grecian grace,
And starting, she awoke, and what to view?
Oh! Powers of Heaven! what dark eye meets she there?
'Tis—'tis her father's—fixed upon the pair !

XXXVI

Then shrieking, she arose, and shrieking fell,
With joy and sorrow, hope and fear, to see
Him whom she deemed a habitant where dwell
The ocean-buried, risen from death, to be
Perchance the death of one she loved too well.
Dear as her father had been to Haidée,
It was a moment of that awful kind—
I have seen such—but must not call to mind

XXXVII

Up Juan sprang to Haidée's bitter shriek,
And caught her falling, and from off the wall
Snatched down his sabre, in hot haste to wreak
Vengeance on him who was the cause of all
Then Lambro, who till now forbore to speak,
Smiled scornfully, and said, "Within my call,

DON JUAN

A thousand scimitars await the word;
Put up, young man, put up your silly sword."

XXXVIII

And Haidée clung around him: "Juan, 'tis—
'Tis Lambro—'tis my father! Kneel with me—
He will forgive us—yes—it must be—yes
Oh! dearest father, in this agony
Of pleasure and of pain—even while I kiss
Thy garment's hem with transport, can it be
That doubt should mingle with my filial joy?
Deal with me as thou wilt, but spare this boy "

XXXIX

High and inscrutable the old man stood,
Calm in his voice, and calm within his eye—
Not always signs with him of calmest mood
He looked upon her, but gave no reply;
Then turned to Juan, in whose cheek the blood
Oft came and went, as there resolved to die,
In arms, at least, he stood, in act to spring
On the first foe whom Lambro's call might bring.

XL

"Young man, your sword;" so Lambro once more said
Juan replied, "Not while this arm is free "
The old man's cheek grew pale, but not with dread,
And drawing from his belt a pistol he
Replied, "Your blood be then on your own head."
Then looked close at the flint, as if to see
'Twas fresh—for he had lately used the lock—
And next proceeded quietly to cock.

CANTO THE FOURTH

XXI

It has a strange quick jar upon the ear,
That cocking of a pistol, when you know
A moment more will bring the sight to bear
Upon your person, twelve yards off, or so,
A gentlemanly distance, not too near,
If you have got a former friend for foe,
But after being fired at once or twice,
The ear becomes more Irish, and less nice.

XLII

Lambro presented, and one instant more
Had stopped this Canto, and Don Juan's breath,
When Haidée threw herself her boy before;
Stern as her sire "On me," she cried, "let Death
Descend—the fault is mine; this fatal shore
He found—but sought not. I have pledged my faith;
I love him—I will die with him: I knew
Your nature's firmness—know your daughter's too."

XLIII

A minute past, and she had been all tears,
And tenderness, and infancy; but now
She stood as one who championed human fears—
Pale, statue-like, and stern, she wooed the blow;
And tall beyond her sex, and their compeers,
She drew up to her height, as if to show
A fairer mark; and with a fixed eye scanned
Her father's face—but never stopped his hand.

XLIV

He gazed on her, and she on him, 'twas strange
How like they looked! the expression was the same;

DON JUAN

Serenely savage, with a little change
In the large dark eye's mutual-darted flame;
For she, too, was as one who could avenge,
If cause should be—a lioness, though tame.
Her father's blood before her father's face
Boiled up, and proved her truly of his race

XLV

I said they were alike, their features and
Their stature, differing but in sex and years;
Even to the delicacy of their hand
There was resemblance, such as true blood wears,
And now to see them, thus divided, stand
In fixed ferocity, when joyous tears
And sweet sensations should have welcomed both,
Shows what the passions are in their full growth

XLVI

The father paused a moment, then withdrew
His weapon, and replaced it, but stood still,
And looking on her, as to look her through,
“Not *I*,” he said, “have sought this stranger's ill!
Not *I* have made this desolation few
Would bear such outrage, and forbear to kill,
But I must do my duty—how thou hast
Done thine, the present vouches for the past

XLVII

“Let him disarm; or, by my father's head,
His own shall roll before you like a ball!”
He raised his whistle, as the word he said,
And blew; another answered to the call,
And rushing in disorderly, though led,
And armed from boot to turban, one and all,

CANTO THE FOURTH

Some twenty of his train came, rank on rank;
He gave the word,—“Arrest or slay the Frank.”

XLVIII

Then, with a sudden movement, he withdrew
His daughter, while compressed within his clasp,
'Twixt her and Juan interposed the crew;
In vain she struggled in her father's grasp—
His arms were like a serpent's coil then flew
Upon their prey, as darts an angry asp,
The file of pirates—save the foremost, who
Had fallen, with his right shoulder half cut through.

XLIX

The second had his cheek laid open, but
The third, a wary, cool old sworder, took
The blows upon his cutlass, and then put
His own well in, so well, ere you could look,
His man was floored, and helpless at his foot,
With the blood running like a little brook
From two smart sabre gashes, deep and red—
One on the arm, the other on the head

L

And then they bound him where he fell, and bore
Juan from the apartment: with a sign
Old Lambro bade them take him to the shore,
Where lay some ships which were to sail at nine.
They laid him in a boat, and plied the oar
Until they reached some galliots, placed in line;
On board of one of these, and under hatches,
They stowed him, with strict orders to the watches.

DON JUAN

LI

The world is full of strange vicissitudes,
And here was one exceedingly unpleasant.
A gentleman so rich in the world's goods,
Handsome and young, enjoying all the present,
Just at the very time when he least broods
On such a thing, is suddenly to sea sent,
Wounded and chained, so that he cannot move,
And all because a lady fell in love.

LII

Here I must leave him, for I grow pathetic,
Moved by the Chinese nymph of tears, green tea!
Than whom Cassandra was not more prophetic;
For if my pure libations exceed three,
I feel my heart become so sympathetic,
That I must have recourse to black Bohea
'Tis pity wine should be so deleterious,
For tea and coffee leave us much more serious,

LIII

Unless when qualified with thee, Cogniac!
Sweet Naiad of the Phlegethontic rill!
Ah! why the liver wilt thou thus attack,
And make, like other nymphs, thy lovers ill?
I would take refuge in weak punch, but *rack*
(In each sense of the word), whene'er I fill
My mild and midnight beakers to the brim,
Wakes me next morning with its synonym.

LIV

I leave Don Juan for the present, safe—
Not sound, poor fellow, but severely wounded;

CANTO THE FOURTH

Yet could his corporal pangs amount to half
Of those with which his Haidée's bosom bounded !
She was not one to weep, and rave, and chafe,
And then give way, subdued because surrounded ;
Her mother was a Moorish maid, from Fez,
Where all is Eden, or a wilderness.

LV

There the large olive rains its amber store
In marble founts ; there grain, and flower, and fruit,
Gush from the earth until the land runs o'er ;
But there, too, many a poison-tree has root,
And Midnight listens to the lion's roar,
And long, long deserts scorch the camel's foot,
Or heaving whelm the helpless caravan ;
And as the soil is, so the heart of man.

LVI

Afric is all the Sun's, and as her earth
Her human clay is kindled ; full of power
For good or evil, burning from its birth,
The Moorish blood partakes the planet's hour,
And like the soil beneath it will bring forth :
Beauty and love were Haidée's mother's dower ;
But her large dark eye showed deep Passion's force,
Though sleeping like a lion near a source.

LVII

Her daughter, tempered with a milder ray,
Like summer clouds all silvery, smooth, and fair,
Till slowly charged with thunder they display
Terror to earth, and tempest to the air,
Had held till now her soft and milky way ;
But overwrought with Passion and Despair,

DON JUAN

The fire burst forth from her Numidian veins,
Even as the Simoom sweeps the blasted plains

LVIII

The last sight which she saw was Juan's gore,
And he himself o'ermastered and cut down,
His blood was running on the very floor
Where late he trod, her beautiful, her own,
Thus much she viewed an instant and no more,—
Her struggles ceased with one convulsive groan,
On her Sire's arm, which until now scarce held
Her writhing, fell she like a cedar felled

LIX

A vein had burst, and her sweet lips' pure dyes
Were dabbled with the deep blood which ran o'er,
And her head drooped, as when the lily lies
O'ercharged with rain her summoned handmaids bore
Their lady to her couch with gushing eyes,
Of herbs and cordials they produced their store,
But she defied all means they could employ,
Like one Life could not hold, nor Death destroy

LX

Days lay she in that state unchanged, though chill—
With nothing livid, still her lips were red,
She had no pulse, but Death seemed absent still,
No hideous sign proclaimed her surely dead;
Corruption came not in each mind to kill
All hope; to look upon her sweet face bred
New thoughts of Life, for it seemed full of soul—
She had so much, Earth could not claim the whole.

CANTO THE FOURTH

LXI

The ruling passion, such as marble shows
When exquisitely chiselled, still lay there,
But fixed as marble's unchanged aspect throws
O'er the fair Venus, but for ever fair,
O'er the Laocoon's all eternal throes,
And ever-dying Gladiator's air,
Their energy like life forms all their fame,
Yet looks not life, for they are still the same. —

LXII

She woke at length, but not as sleepers wake,
Rather the dead, for life seemed something new,
A strange sensation which she must partake
Perforce, since whatsoever met her view
Struck not on memory, though a heavy ache
Lay at her heart, whose earliest beat still true
Brought back the sense of pain without the cause,
For, for a while, the Furies made a pause.

LXIII

She looked on many a face with vacant eye,
On many a token without knowing what;
She saw them watch her without asking why,
And recked not who around her pillow sat;
Not speechless, though she spoke not, not a sigh
Relieved her thoughts, dull silence and quick chat
Were tried in vain by those who served; she gave
No sign, save breath, of having left the grave.

LXIV

Her handmaids tended, but she heeded not;
Her father watched, she turned her eyes away;

DON JUAN

She recognised no being, and no spot,
 However dear or cherished in their day;
They changed from room to room—but all forgot—
 Gentle, but without memory she lay;
At length those eyes, which they would fain be weaning
Back to old thoughts, waxed full of fearful meaning.

LXV

And then a slave bethought her of a harp;
 The harper came, and tuned his instrument,
At the first notes, irregular and sharp,
 On him her flashing eyes a moment bent,
Then to the wall she turned as if to warp
 Her thoughts from sorrow through her heart re-sent;
And he began a long low island-song
Of ancient days, ere Tyranny grew strong.

LXVI

Anon her thin wan fingers beat the wall
 In time to his old tune; he changed the theme,
And sung of Love; the fierce name struck through all
 Her recollection; on her flashed the dream
Of what she was, and is, if ye could call
 To be so being; in a gushing stream
The tears rushed forth from her o'erclouded brain,
Like mountain mists at length dissolved in rain.

LXVII

Short solace, vain relief!—Thought came too quick,
 And whirled her brain to madness, she arose
As one who ne'er had dwelt among the sick,
 And flew at all she met, as on her foes;
But no one ever heard her speak or shriek,
 Although her paroxysm drew towards its close;—

CANTO THE FOURTH

Hers was a frenzy which disdained to rave,
Even when they smote her, in the hope to save.

LXVIII

Yet she betrayed at times a gleam of sense;
Nothing could make her meet her father's face,
Though on all other things with looks intense
She gazed, but none she ever could retrace;
Food she refused, and raiment; no pretence
Availed for either; neither change of place,
Nor time, nor skill, nor remedy, could give her
Senses to sleep—the power seemed gone for ever.

LXIX

Twelve days and nights she withered thus; at last,
Without a groan, or sigh, or glance, to show
A parting pang, the spirit from her passed.
And they who watched her nearest could not know
The very instant, till the change that cast
Her sweet face into shadow, dull and slow,
Glazed o'er her eyes—the beautiful, the black—
Oh! to possess such lustre—and then lack!

LXX

She died, but not alone; she held, within,
A second principle of Life, which might
Have dawned a fair and sinless child of sin;
But closed its little being without light,
And went down to the grave unborn, wherein
Blossom and bough lie withered with one blight;
In vain the dews of Heaven descend above
The bleeding flower and blasted fruit of Love.

DON JUAN

LXXI

Thus lived—thus died she, never more on her
 Shall Sorrow light, or Shame. She was not made
Through years or moons the inner weight to bear,
 Which colder hearts endure till they are laid
By age in earth her days and pleasures were
 Brief, but delightful—such as had not staid
Long with her destiny, but she sleeps well
By the sea-shore, whereon she loved to dwell

LXXII

That isle is now all desolate and bare,
 Its dwellings down, its tenants passed away,
None but her own and father's grave is there,
 And nothing outward tells of human clay,
Ye could not know where lies a thing so fair,
 No stone is there to show, no tongue to say,
What was, no dirge, except the hollow sea's,
Mourns o'er the Beauty of the Cyclades.

LXXIII

But many a Greek maid in a loving song
 Sighs o'er her name, and many an islander
With her sire's story makes the night less long,
 Valour was his, and Beauty dwelt with her
If she loved rashly, her life paid for wrong—
 A heavy price must all pay who thus err,
In some shape; let none think to fly the danger,
For soon or late Love is his own avenger.

LXXIV

But let me change this theme, which grows too sad,
 And lay this sheet of sorrows on the shelf,

CANTO THE FOURTH

I don't much like describing people mad,
For fear of seeming rather touched myself—
Besides, I've no more on this head to add,
And as my Muse is a capricious elf,
We'll put about, and try another tack
With Juan, left half-killed some stanzas back.

LXXV

Wounded and fettered, "cabined, cribbed, confined,"
Some days and nights elapsed before that he
Could altogether call the past to mind;
And when he did, he found himself at sea,
Sailing six knots an hour before the wind,
The shores of Ilion lay beneath their lee—
Another time he might have liked to see 'em,
But now was not much pleased with Cape Sigeum.

LXXVI

There, on the green and village-cotted hill, is
(Flanked by the Hellespont, and by the sea)
Entombed the bravest of the brave, Achilles,
They say so—(Bryant says the contrary)
And further downward, tall and towering still, is
The tumulus—of whom? Heaven knows! 't may be
Patroclus, Ajax, or Protesilaus—
All heroes, who if living still would slay us.

LXXVII

High barrows, without marble, or a name,
A vast, untilled, and mountain-skirted plain,
And Ida in the distance, still the same,
And old Scamander (if 'tis he) remain,
The situation seems still formed for fame—
A hundred thousand men might fight again,

DON JUAN

With ease; but where I sought for Ilion's walls,
The quiet sheep feeds, and the tortoise crawls,

LXXVIII

Troops of untended horses, here and there
Some little hamlets, with new names uncouth,
Some shepherds (unlike Paris) led to stare
A moment at the European youth
Whom to the spot their school-boy feelings bear,
A Turk, with beads in hand, and pipe in mouth,
Extremely taken with his own religion,
Are what I found there—but the devil a Phrygian.

LXXIX

Don Juan, here permitted to emerge
From his dull cabin, found himself a slave,
Forlorn, and gazing on the deep blue surge,
O'ershadowed there by many a Hero's grave,
Weak still with loss of blood, he scarce could urge
A few brief questions, and the answers gave
No very satisfactory information
About his past or present situation.

LXXX

He saw some fellow captives, who appeared
To be Italians (as they were in fact)—
From them, at least, *their* destiny he heard,
Which was an odd one, a troop going to act
In Sicily—all singers, duly reared
In their vocation, had not been attacked
In sailing from Livorno by the pirate,
But sold by the *impresario* at no high rate.

CANTO THE FOURTH

LXXXI

By one of these, the *buffo* of the party,
Juan was told about their curious case,
For although destined to the Turkish mart, he
Still kept his spirits up—at least his face;
The little fellow really looked quite hearty,
And bore him with some gaiety and grace,
Showing a much more reconciled demeanour,
Than did the prima donna and the tenor.

LXXXII

In a few words he told their hapless story,
Saying, “Our Machiavelian *impresario*,
Making a signal off some promontory,
Hailed a strange brig—*Corpo di Caio Mario!*
We were transferred on board her in a hurry,
Without a single *scudo* of *salaro*,
But if the Sultan has a taste for song,
We will revive our fortunes before long.

LXXXIII

“The prima donna, though a little old,
And haggard with a dissipated life,
And subject, when the house is thin, to cold,
Has some good notes, and then the tenor’s wife,
With no great voice, is pleasing to behold;
Last carnival she made a deal of strife,
By carrying off Count Cesare Cicogna
From an old Roman Princess at Bologna.

LXXXIV

“And then there are the dancers, there’s the Nini,
With more than one profession gains by all;

DON JUAN

Then there's that laughing slut the Pelegrini,
She, too, was fortunate last Carnival,
And made at least five hundred good *zecchini*,
But spends so fast, she has not now a paul;
And then there's the Grotesca—such a dancer!
Where men have souls or bodies she must answer.

LXXXV

“As for the *figuranti*, they are like
The rest of all that tribe, with here and there
A pretty person, which perhaps may strike—
The rest are hardly fitted for a fair;
There's one, though tall and stiffer than a pike,
Yet has a sentimental kind of air
Which might go far, but she don't dance with vigour—
The more's the pity, with her face and figure.

LXXXVI

“As for the men, they are a middling set;
The *musico* is but a cracked old basin,
But, being qualified in one way yet,
May the seraglio do to set his face in,
And as a servant some preferment get;
His singing I no further trust can place in
From all the Pope makes yearly 'twould perplex
To find three perfect pipes of the *third* sex

LXXXVII

“The tenor's voice is spoilt by affectation;
And for the bass, the beast can only bellow—
In fact, he had no singing education,
An ignorant, noteless, timeless, tuneless fellow;
But being the prima donna's near relation,
Who swore his voice was very rich and mellow,

CANTO THE FOURTH

They hired him, though to hear him you'd believe
An ass was practising recitative.

LXXXVIII

"'Twould not become myself to dwell upon
My own merits, and though young—I see, Sir—you
Have got a travelled air, which speaks you one
To whom the opera is by no means new:
You've heard of Raucocanti?—I'm the man,
The time may come when you may hear me too,
You was not last year at the fair of Lugo,
But next, when I'm engaged to sing there—do go.

LXXXIX

"Our baritone I almost had forgot,
A pretty lad, but bursting with conceit;
With graceful action, science not a jot,
A voice of no great compass, and not sweet,
He always is complaining of his lot,
Forsooth, scarce fit for ballads in the street;
In lovers' parts his passion more to breathe,
Having no heart to show, he shows his teeth "

XC

Here Raucocanti's eloquent recital
Was interrupted by the pirate crew,
Who came at stated moments to invite all
The captives back to their sad berths, each threw
A rueful glance upon the waves (which bright all
From the blue skies derived a double blue,
Dancing all free and happy in the sun),
And then went down the hatchway one by one.

DON JUAN

XCI

They heard next day—that in the Dardanelles,
Waiting for his Sublimity's firmān,
The most imperative of sovereign spells,
Which everybody does without who can,
More to secure them in their naval cells,
Lady to lady, well as man to man,
Were to be chained and lotted out per couple,
For the slave market of Constantinople.

XCII

It seems when this allotment was made out,
There chanced to be an odd male, and odd female,
Who (after some discussion and some doubt,
If the soprano might be deemed to be male,
They placed him o'er the women as a scout)
Were linked together, and it happened the male
Was Juan,—who, an awkward thing at his age,
Paired off with a Bacchante blooming visage.

XCIII

With Raucocanti lucklessly was chained
The tenor; these two hated with a hate
Found only on the stage, and each more pained
With this his tuneful neighbour than his fate,
Sad strife arose, for they were so cross-grained,
Instead of bearing up without debate,
That each pulled different ways with many an oath,
“Arcades ambo,” *id est*—blackguards both.

XCIV

Juan's companion was a Romagnole,
But bred within the march of old Ancona,

CANTO THE FOURTH

With eyes that looked into the very soul
 (And other chief points of a *bella donna*),
Bright—and as black and burning as a coal;
 And through her clear brunette complexion shone a
Great wish to please—a most attractive dower,
Especially when added to the power.

XCV

But all that power was wasted upon him,
 For Sorrow o'er each sense held stern command,
Her eye might flash on his, but found it dim:
 And though thus chained, as natural her hand
Touched his, nor that—nor any handsome limb
 (And she had some not easy to withstand)
Could stir his pulse, or make his faith feel brittle,
Perhaps his recent wounds might help a little.

XCVI

No matter, we should ne'er too much inquire,
 But facts are facts no Knight could be more true,
And firmer faith no Lady-love desire,
 We will omit the proofs, save one or two
'Tis said no one in hand "can hold a fire
 By thought of frosty Caucasus"—but few,
I really think, yet Juan's then ordeal
Was more triumphant, and not much less real

XCVII

Here I might enter on a chaste description,
 Having withstood temptation in my youth,
But hear that several people take exception
 At the first two books having too much truth;

DON JUAN

Therefore I'll make Don Juan leave the ship soon,
Because the publisher declares, in sooth,
Through needles' eyes it easier for the camel is
To pass, than those two cantos into families.

XCVIII

'Tis all the same to me; I'm fond of yielding,
And therefore leave them to the purer page
Of Smollett, Prior, Ariosto, Fielding,
Who say strange things for so correct an age;
I once had great alacrity in wielding
My pen, and liked poetic war to wage,
And recollect the time when all this cant
Would have provoked remarks—which now it shan't.

XCIX

As boys love rows, my boyhood liked a squabble,
But at this hour I wish to part in peace,
Leaving such to the literary rabble;
Whether my verse's fame be doomed to cease
While the right hand which wrote it still is able,
Or of some centuries to take a lease,
The grass upon my grave will grow as long,
And sigh to midnight winds, but not to song.

C

Of poets who come down to us through distance
Of time and tongues, the foster-babes of Fame,
Life seems the smallest portion of existence,
Where twenty ages gather o'er a name,
'Tis as a snowball which derives assistance
From every flake, and yet rolls on the same,

CANTO THE FOURTH

Even till an iceberg it may chance to grow;
But, after all, 'tis nothing but cold snow

CI

And so great names are nothing more than nominal,
And love of Glory's but an airy lust,
Too often in its fury overcoming all
Who would as 'twere identify their dust
From out the wide destruction, which, entombing all,
Leaves nothing till "the coming of the just"—
Save change: I've stood upon Achilles' tomb,
And heard Troy doubted, Time will doubt of Rome

CII

The very generations of the dead
Are swept away, and tomb inherits tomb,
Until the memory of an Age is fled,
And, buried, sinks beneath its offspring's doom:
Where are the epitaphs our fathers read?
Save a few gleaned from the sepulchral gloom
Which once-named myriads nameless lie beneath,
And lose their own in universal Death.

CIII

I canter by the spot each afternoon
Where perished in his fame the hero-boy,
Who lived too long for men, but died too soon
For human vanity, the young De Foix!
A broken pillar, not uncouthly hewn,
But which Neglect is hastening to destroy,
Records Ravenna's carnage on its face,
While weeds and ordure rankle round the base.

DON JUAN

CIV

I pass each day where Dante's bones are laid:
A little cupola, more neat than solemn,
Protects his dust, but reverence here is paid
To the Bard's tomb, and not the Warrior's column
The time must come, when both alike decayed,
The Chieftain's trophy, and the Poet's volume,
Will sink where lie the songs and wars of earth,
Before Pelides' death, or Homer's birth

CV

With human blood that column was cemented,
With human filth that column is defiled,
As if the peasant's coarse contempt were vented
To show his loathing of the spot he soiled:
Thus is the trophy used, and thus lamented
Should ever be those blood-hounds, from whose wild
Instinct of gore and glory Earth has known
Those sufferings Dante saw in Hell alone

CVI

Yet there will still be bards. though Fame is smoke,
Its fumes are frankincense to human thought;
And the unquiet feelings, which first woke
Song in the world, will seek what then they sought,
As on the beach the waves at last are broke,
Thus to their extreme verge the passions brought
Dash into poetry, which is but passion,
Or, at least, was so ere it grew a fashion.

CVII

If in the course of such a life as was
At once adventurous and contemplative,

CANTO THE FOURTH

Men who partake all passions as they pass,
Acquire the deep and bitter power to give
Their images again as in a glass,
And in such colours that they seem to live;
You may do right forbidding them to show 'em,
But spoil (I think) a very pretty poem.

CVIII

Oh! ye, who make the fortunes of all books!
Benign Ceruleans of the second sex!
Who advertise new poems by your looks,
Your "Imprimatur" will ye not annex?
What! must I go to the oblivious cooks,
Those Cornish plunderers of Parnassian wrecks?
Ah! must I then the only minstrel be,
Proscribed from tasting your Castalian tea!

CIX

What! can I prove "a lion" then no more?
A ball-room bard, a foolscap, hot-press darling?
To bear the compliments of many a bore,
And sigh, "I can't get out," like Yorick's starling;
Why then I'll swear, as poet Wordy swore
(Because the world won't read him, always snarling),
That taste is gone, that fame is but a lottery,
"Drawn by the blue-coat misses of a coterie.

CX

Oh! "darkly, deeply, beautifully blue,"
As some one somewhere sings about the sky,
And I, ye learned ladies, say of you;
They say your stockings are so—(Heaven knows why,

DON JUAN

I have examined few pair of that hue);
Blue as the garters which serenely lie
Round the Patrician left-legs, which adorn
The festal midnight, and the levee morn.

CXI

Yet some of you are most seraphic creatures—
But times are altered since, a rhyming lover,
You read my stanzas, and I read your features;
And—but no matter, all those things are over,
Still I have no dislike to learned natures,
For sometimes such a world of virtues cover;
I knew one woman of that purple school,
The loveliest, chastest, best, but—quite a fool.

CXII

Humboldt, “the first of travellers,” but not
The last, if late accounts be accurate,
Invented, by some name I have forgot,
As well as the sublime discovery’s date,
An airy instrument, with which he sought
To ascertain the atmospheric state,
By measuring “the *intensity of blue*”
Oh, Lady Daphne! let me measure you!

CXIII

But to the narrative:—The vessel bound
With slaves to sell off in the capital,
After the usual process, might be found
At anchor under the seraglio wall,
Her cargo, from the plague being safe and sound,
Were landed in the market, one and all;
And, there, with Georgians, Russians, and Circassians,
Bought up for different purposes and passions.

CANTO THE FOURTH

CXIV

Some went off dearly; fifteen hundred dollars
For one Circassian, a sweet girl, were given,
Warranted virgin; Beauty's brightest colours
Had decked her out in all the hues of heaven
Her sale sent home some disappointed bawlers,
Who bade on till the hundreds reached eleven;
But when the offer went beyond, they knew
'Twas for the Sultan, and at once withdrew.

CXV

Twelve negresses from Nubia brought a price
Which the West Indian market scarce could bring—
Though Wilberforce, at last, has made it twice
What 'twas ere Abolition, and the thing
Need not seem very wonderful, for Vice
Is always much more splendid than a King:
The Virtues, even the most exalted, Charity,
Are saving—Vice spares nothing for a rarity.

CXVI

But for the destiny of this young troop,
How some were bought by Pachas, some by Jews,
How some to burdens were obliged to stoop,
And others rose to the command of crews
As renegadoes; while in hapless group,
Hoping no very old Vizier might choose,
The females stood, as one by one they picked 'em,
To make a mistress, or fourth wife, or victim

DON JUAN

CXVII

All this must be reserved for further song;
Also our Hero's lot, howe'er unpleasant
(Because this Canto has become too long)
Must be postponed discreetly for the present;
I'm sensible redundancy is wrong,
But could not for the Muse of me put less in 't
And now delay the progress of Don Juan,
Till what is called in Ossian the fifth Duan

1818—1820



CANTO XV

XCIX

Between two worlds Life hovers like a star,
'Twixt Night and Morn upon the horizon's verge
How little do we know that which we are!
How less what we may be! The eternal surge
Of Time and Tide rolls on and bears afar
Our bubbles, as the old burst new emerge
Lashed from the foam of ages; while the graves
Of Empires heave but like some passing waves

1823

CAIN
A MYSTERY

“Now the Serpent was more subtil than any
beast of the field which the Lord God had made.”

Genesis, Chapter 3rd, Verse 1.

TO
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.,
THIS MYSTERY OF *CAIN* IS INSCRIBED
BY HIS OBLIGED FRIEND
& FAITHFUL SERVANT
THE AUTHOR

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN

ADAM

CAIN

ABEL

WOMEN

EVE

ADAH

ZILLAH

SPIRITS

ANGEL OF THE LORD

LUCIFER

ACT I

SCENE I.—*The Land without Paradise.—Time, Sunrise.*

ADAM, EVE, CAIN, ABEL, ADAH, ZILLAH,
offering a Sacrifice.

ADAM. God, the Eternal! Infinite! All-wise!—
Who out of darkness on the deep didst make
Light on the waters with a word—All Hail!
Jehovah! with returning light—All Hail!

EVE God! who didst name the day, and separate
Morning from night, till then divided never—
Who didst divide the wave from wave, and call
Part of thy work the firmament—All Hail!

ABEL. God! who didst call the elements into
Earth, ocean, air and fire—and with the day
And night, and worlds which these illuminate,
Or shadow, madest beings to enjoy them,
And love both them and thee—All Hail! All Hail!

ADAH. God, the Eternal! Parent of all things!
Who didst create these best and beauteous beings,
To be belovéd, more than all save thee—
Let me love thee and them —All Hail! All Hail!

ZILLAH. Oh, God! who loving, making, blessing all,
Yet didst permit the Serpent to creep in,
And drive my father forth from Paradise,
Keep us from further evil —Hail! All Hail!

ADAM. Son Cain! my first-born—wherefore art thou
silent?

CAIN. Why should I speak?

ADAM To pray.

CAIN. Have ye not prayed?

ADAM. We have, most fervently.

CAIN. And loudly I

CAIN

Have heard you

ADAM. So will God, I trust.

ABEL. Amen!

ADAM. But thou my eldest born! art silent still?

CAIN. 'Tis better I should be so.

ADAM. Wherefore so?

CAIN. I have nought to ask.

ADAM. Nor aught to thank for?

CAIN. No.

ADAM. Dost thou not live?

CAIN. Must I not die?

EVE. Alas!

The fruit of our forbidden tree begins
To fall.

ADAM. And we must gather it again.

Oh God! why didst thou plant the tree of knowledge?

CAIN. And wherefore plucked ye not the tree of life?
Ye might have then defied him.

ADAM. Oh! my son,

Blaspheme not: these are Serpent's words

CAIN. Why not?

The snake spoke *truth*, it *was* the Tree of Knowledge,

It *was* the Tree of Life: knowledge is good,

And Life is good; and how can both be evil?

EVE. My boy! thou speakest as I spoke in sin,

Before thy birth. let me not see renewed

My misery in thine. I have repented

Let me not see my offspring fall into

The snares beyond the walls of Paradise,

Which even in Paradise destroyed his parents.

Content thee with what *is*. Had we been so,

Thou now hadst been contented.—Oh, my son!

ADAM. Our orisons completed, let us hence,

ACT I

Each to his task of toil—not heavy, though
Needful the earth is young, and yields us kindly
Her fruits with little labour.

EVE. Cain—my son—
Behold thy father cheerful and resigned—
And do as he doth. [*Exeunt ADAM and EVE.*]

ZILLAH. Wilt thou not, my brother?

ABEL. Why wilt thou wear this gloom upon thy brow,
Which can avail thee nothing, save to rouse
The Eternal anger?

ADAH. My beloved Cain,
Wilt thou frown even on me?

CAIN. No, Adah! no;
I fain would be alone a little while.
Abel, I'm sick at heart; but it will pass;
Precede me, brother—I will follow shortly
And you too, sisters, tarry not behind,
Your gentleness must not be harshly met
I'll follow you anon

ADAH. If not, I will
Return to seek you here.

ABEL. The peace of God
Be on your spirit, brother!
[*Exeunt ABEL, ZILLAH, and ADAH*]

CAIN (*solus*). And this is
Life?—Toil! and wherefore should I toil?—because
My father could not keep his place in Eden.
What had I done in this?—I was unborn
I sought not to be born; nor love the state
To which that birth has brought me. Why did he
Yield to the Serpent and the woman? or
Yielding—why suffer? What was there in this?

CAIN

The tree was planted, and why not for him?
If not, why place him near it, where it grew,
The fairest in the centre? They have but
One answer to all questions, “ ’Twas *his* will,
And *he* is good.” How know I that? Because
He is all-powerful, must all-good, too, follow?
I judge but by the fruits—and they are bitter—
Which I must feed on for a fault not mine
Whom have we here?—A shape like to the angels
Yet of a sterner and a sadder aspect
Of spiritual essence why do I quake?
Why should I fear him more than other spirits,
Whom I see daily wave their fiery swords
Before the gates round which I linger oft,
In Twilight’s hour, to catch a glimpse of those
Gardens which are my just inheritance,
Ere the night closes o’er the inhibited walls
And the immortal trees which overtop
The Cherubim-defended battlements?
If I shrink not from these, the fire-armed angels,
Why should I quail from him who now approaches?
Yet he seems mightier far than them, nor less
Beauteous, and yet not all as beautiful
As he hath been, and might be: sorrow seems
Half of his immortality. And is it
So? and can aught grieve save Humanity?
He cometh.

Enter LUCIFER

LUCIFER Mortal!

CAIN. Spirit, who art thou?

LUCIFER Master of spirits.

ACT I

CAIN. And being so, canst thou
Leave them, and walk with dust?

LUCIFER I know the thoughts
Of dust, and feel for it, and with you.

CAIN. How!
You know my thoughts?

LUCIFER. They are the thoughts of all
Worthy of thought,—'tis your immortal part
Which speaks within you.

CAIN. What immortal part?
This has not been revealed—the Tree of Life
Was withheld from us by my father's folly,
While that of Knowledge, by my mother's haste,
Was plucked too soon; and all the fruit is Death!

LUCIFER. They have deceived thee, thou shalt live.

CAIN. I live,
But live to die, and, living, see no thing
To make death hateful, save an innate clinging,
A loathsome, and yet all invincible
Instinct of life, which I abhor, as I
Despise myself, yet cannot overcome—
And so I live. Would I had never lived!

LUCIFER. Thou livest—and must live forever. Think not
The Earth, which is thine outward cov'ring, is
Existence—it will cease, and thou wilt be
No less than thou art now.

CAIN. No less! and why
No more?

LUCIFER. It may be thou shalt be as we?

CAIN. And ye?

LUCIFER. Are everlasting

CAIN. Are ye happy?

CAIN

LUCIFER We are mighty.

CAIN Are ye happy?

LUCIFER. No. art thou?

CAIN How should I be so? Look on me!

LUCIFER. Poor clay!

And thou pretendest to be wretched! Thou!

CAIN I am —and thou, with all thy might, what art thou?

LUCIFER. One who aspired to be what made thee, and
Would not have made thee what thou art

CAIN. Ah!

Thou look'st almost a god, and——

LUCIFER. I am none

And having failed to be one, would be nought
Save what I am. He conquered, let him reign!

CAIN. Who?

LUCIFER Thy Sire's maker—and the Earth's

CAIN. And Heaven's,

And all that in them is. So I have heard

His Seraphs sing; and so my father saith

LUCIFER. They say—what they must sing and say, on
pain

Of being that which I am,—and thou art—
Of spirits and of men.

CAIN And what is that?

LUCIFER. Souls who dare use their immortality—

Souls who dare look the Omnipotent tyrant in

His everlasting face, and tell him that

His evil is not good! If he has made,

As he saith—which I know not, nor believe—

But, if he made us, he cannot unmake—

We are immortal!—nay, he'd *have* us so,

That he may torture.—let him! He is great—

ACT I

But, in his greatness, is no happier than
We in our conflict! Goodness would not make
Evil, and what else hath he made? But let him
Sit on his vast and solitary throne,
Creating worlds, to make eternity
Less burthensome to his immense existence
And unparticipated solitude,
Let him crowd orb on orb he is alone
Indefinite, Indissoluble Tyrant;
Could he but crush himself, 'twere the best boon
He ever granted but let him reign on,
And multiply himself in misery!
Spirits and Men, at least we sympathise—
And, suffering in concert, make our pangs
Innumerable more endurable,
By the unbounded sympathy of all
With all! But *He*! so wretched in his height,
So restless in his wretchedness, must still
Create, and re-create—perhaps he'll make
One day a Son unto himself—as he
Gave you a father—and if he so doth,
Mark me! that Son will be a sacrifice!

CAIN Thou speak'st to me of things which long have swum
In visions through my thought: I never could
Reconcile what I saw with what I heard.
My father and my mother talk to me
Of serpents, and of fruits and trees I see
The gates of what they call their Paradise
Guarded by fiery-sworded Cherubim,
Which shut them out—and me: I feel the weight
Of daily toil, and constant thought I look
Around a world where I seem nothing, with

CAIN

Thoughts which arise within me, as if they
Could master all things—but I thought alone
This misery was *mine* My father is
Tamed down ; my mother has forgot the mind
Which made her thirst for knowledge at the risk
Of an eternal curse , my brother is
A watching shepherd boy, who offers up
The firstlings of the flock to him who bids
The earth yield nothing to us without sweat ,
My sister Zillah sings an earlier hymn
Than the birds' matins, and my Adah—my
Own and belovéd—she, too, understands not
The mind which overwhelms me; never till
Now met I aught to sympathise with me
'Tis well—I rather would consort with spirits.

LUCIFER. And hadst thou not been fit by thine own soul
For such companionship, I would not now
Have stood before thee as I am a serpent
Had been enough to charm ye, as before

CAIN Ah! didst *thou* tempt my mother?

LUCIFER. I tempt none,
Save with the truth was not the Tree the Tree
Of Knowledge? and was not the Tree of Life
Still fruitful? Did *I* bid her pluck them not?
Did *I* plant things prohibited within
The reach of beings innocent, and curious
By their own innocence? I would have made ye
Gods, and even He who thrust ye forth, so thrust ye
Because “ye should not eat the fruits of life,
“And become gods as we” Were those his words?

CAIN. They were, as I have heard from those who
In thunder.

[heard them,

ACT I

LUCIFER. Then who was the Demon? He
Who would not let ye live, or he who would
Have made ye live for ever in the joy
And power of Knowledge?

CAIN. Would they had snatched both
The fruits, or neither!

LUCIFER. One is yours already,
The other may be still.

CAIN. How so?

LUCIFER By being
Yourselves, in your resistance Nothing can
Quench the mind, if the mind will be itself
And centre of surrounding things—'tis made
To sway

CAÏN. But didst thou tempt my parents?

LUCIFER I?
Poor clay! what should I tempt them for, or how?

CAIN They say the Serpent was a spirit.

LUCIFER. Who

Saith that? It is not written so on high
The proud One will not so far falsify,
Though man's vast fears and little vanity
Would make him cast upon the spiritual nature
His own low failing. The snake *was* the snake—
No more, and yet not less than those he tempted,
In nature being earth also—*more* in *wisdom*,
Since he could overcome them, and foreknew
The knowledge fatal to their narrow joys
Think'st thou I'd take the shape of things that die?

CAIN. But the thing had a demon ?

LUCIFER. He but woke one
In those he spake to with his forky tongue.

CAIN

I tell thee that the serpent was no more
Than a mere serpent ask the Cherubim
Who guard the tempting tree. When thousand ages
Have rolled o'er your dead ashes, and your seed's,
The seed of the then world may thus array
Their earliest fault in fable, and attribute
To me a shape I scorn, as I scorn all
That bows to him, who made things but to bend
Before his sullen, sole eternity;
But we, who see the truth, must speak it. Thy
Fond parents listened to a creeping thing,
And fell For what should spirits tempt them? What
Was there to envy in the narrow bounds
Of Paradise, that spirits who pervade
Space—but I speak to thee of what thou know'st not,
With all thy Tree of Knowledge.

CAIN. But thou canst not
Speak aught of Knowledge which I would not know,
And do not thirst to know, and bear a mind
To know.

LUCIFER. And heart to look on?

CAIN. Be it proved

LUCIFER. Darest thou look on Death?

CAIN He has not yet
Been seen.

LUCIFER But must be undergone

CAIN. My father
Says he is something dreadful, and my mother
Weeps when he's named, and Abel lifts his eyes
To Heaven, and Zillah casts hers to the earth,
And sighs a prayer, and Adah looks on me,
And speaks not.

ACT I

LUCIFER. And thou?

CAIN. Thoughts unspeakable
Crowd in my breast to burning, when I hear
Of this almighty Death, who is, it seems,
Inevitable. Could I wrestle with him?
I wrestled with the lion, when a boy,
In play, till he ran roaring from my gripe.

LUCIFER. It has no shape, but will absorb all things
That bear the form of earth-born being.

CAIN. Ah!

I thought it was a being: who could do
Such evil things to beings save a being?

LUCIFER. Ask the Destroyer.

CAIN Who?

LUCIFER. The Maker—Call him
Which name thou wilt he makes but to destroy.

CAIN I knew not that, yet thought it, since I heard
Of Death. although I know not what it is—
Yet it seems horrible I have looked out
In the vast desolate night in search of him,
And when I saw gigantic shadows in
The umbrage of the walls of Eden, chequered
By the far-flashing of the Cherubs' swords,
I watched for what I thought his coming, for
With fear rose longing in my heart to know
What 'twas which shook us all—but nothing came
And then I turned my weary eyes from off
Our native and forbidden Paradise,
Up to the lights above us, in the azure,
Which are so beautiful shall they, too, die?

LUCIFER. Perhaps—but long outlive both thine and thee.

CAIN. I'm glad of that I would not have them die—

CAIN

They are so lovely What is death? I fear,
I feel, it is a dreadful thing, but what,
I cannot compass 'tis denounced against us,
Both them who sinned and sinned not, as an ill—
What ill?

LUCIFER. To be resolved into the earth

CAIN. But shall I know it?

LUCIFER. As I know not death,
I cannot answer.

CAIN. Were I quiet earth,
That were no evil would I ne'er had been
Aught else but dust!

LUCIFER. That is a grovelling wish,
Less than thy father's—for he wished to know!

CAIN. But not to live—or wherefore plucked he not
The Life-tree?

LUCIFER. He was hindered

CAIN. Deadly error!
Not to snatch first that fruit—but ere he plucked
The knowledge, he was ignorant of death
Alas! I scarcely now know what it is,
And yet I fear it—fear I know not what!

LUCIFER. And I, who know all things, fear nothing, see
What is true knowledge

CAIN. Wilt thou teach me all?

LUCIFER. Aye, upon one condition

CAIN. Name it.

LUCIFER. That
Thou dost fall down and worship me—thy Lord.

CAIN. Thou art not the Lord my father worships

LUCIFER. No.

CAIN. His equal?

ACT I

LUCIFER. No;—I have nought in common with him!
Nor would. I would be aught above—beneath—
Aught save a sharer or a servant of
His power. I dwell apart, but I am great —
Many there are who worship me, and more
Who shall—be thou amongst the first.

CAIN. I never
As yet have bowed unto my father's God.
Although my brother Abel oft implores
That I would join with him in sacrifice —
Why should I bow to thee?

LUCIFER. Hast thou ne'er bowed
To him?

CAIN. Have I not said it?—need I say it?
Could not thy mighty knowledge teach thee that?

LUCIFER. He who bows not to him has bowed to me.

CAIN. But I will bend to neither.

LUCIFER. Ne'er the less,
Thou art my worshipper, not worshipping
Him makes thee mine the same.

CAIN And what is that?

LUCIFER. Thou'lt know here—and hereafter.

CAIN. Let me but
Be taught the mystery of my being.

LUCIFER. Follow
Where I will lead thee.

CAIN. But I must retire
To till the earth—for I had promised—

LUCIFER. What?

CAIN To cull some first-fruits.

LUCIFER. Why?

CAIN. To offer up

ACT I

LUCIFER. I ask
Thee to be mine.

CAIN. I must away with him.

ADAH. And leave us?

CAIN. Aye.

ADAH. And *me*?

CAIN. Belovéd Adah!

ADAH. Let me go with thee.

LUCIFER. No, she must not.

ADAH. Who
Art thou that steppest between heart and heart?

CAIN. He is a God.

ADAH. How know'st thou?

CAIN. He speaks like
A God

ADAH. So did the Serpent, and it lied

LUCIFER. Thou errest, Adah!—was not the Tree that
Of Knowledge?

ADAH. Aye—to our eternal sorrow

LUCIFER. And yet that grief is knowledge—so he lied not:
And if he did betray you, 'twas with Truth,
And Truth in its own essence cannot be
But good.

ADAH. But all we know of it has gathered
Evil on ill; expulsion from our home,
And dread, and toil, and sweat, and heaviness;
Remorse of that which was—and hope of that
Which cometh not. Cain! walk not with this Spirit
Bear with what we have borne, and love me—I
Love thee

LUCIFER. More than thy mother, and thy sire?

ADAH. I do. Is that a sin, too?

CAIN

LUCIFER. No, not yet,
It one day will be in your children.

ADAH What!
Must not my daughter love her brother Enoch?

LUCIFER Not as thou lovest Cain.

ADAH. Oh, my God!
Shall they not love and bring forth things that love
Out of their love? have they not drawn their milk
Out of this bosom? was not he their father,
Born of the same sole womb, in the same hour
With me? did we not love each other? and
In multiplying our being multiply
Things which will love each other as we love
Them?—And as I love thee, my Cain! go not
Forth with this spirit; he is not of ours

LUCIFER. The sin I speak of is not of my making,
And cannot be a sin in you—whate'er
It seem in those who will replace ye in
Mortality.

ADAH. What is the sin which is not
Sin in itself? Can circumstance make sin
Or virtue?—if it doth, we are the slaves
Of

LUCIFER. Higher things than ye are slaves and higher
Than them or ye would be so, did they not
Prefer an independency of torture
To the smooth agonies of adulation,
In hymns and harpings, and self-seeking prayers,
To that which is omnipotent, because
It is omnipotent, and not from love,
But terror and self-hope.

ADAH. Omnipotence

ACT I

Must be all goodness.

LUCIFER. Was it so in Eden?

ADAH. Fiend! tempt me not with beauty; thou art fairer
Than was the serpent, and as false.

LUCIFER. As true.

Ask Eve, your mother: bears she not the knowledge
Of good and evil?

ADAH. Oh, my mother! thou
Hast plucked a fruit more fatal to thine offspring
Than to thyself, thou at the least hast passed
Thy youth in Paradise, in innocent
And happy intercourse with happy spirits.
But we, thy children, ignorant of Eden,
Are girt about by demons, who assume
The words of God, and tempt us with our own
Dissatisfied and curious thoughts—as thou
Wert worked on by the snake, in thy most flushed
And heedless, harmless wantonness of bliss.

I cannot answer this immortal thing
Which stands before me, I cannot abhor him,
I look upon him with a pleasing fear,
And yet I fly not from him in his eye
There is a fastening attraction which
Fixes my fluttering eyes on his, my heart
Beats quick, he awes me, and yet draws me near,
Nearer and nearer —Cain—Cain—save me from him!

CAIN. What dreads my Adah? This is no ill spirit.

ADAH. He is not God—nor God's: I have beheld
The Cherubs and the Seraphs, he looks not
Like them.

CAIN But there are spirits loftier still—
The archangels

CAIN

LUCIFER. And still loftier than the archangels

ADAH. Aye—but not blessed

LUCIFER. If the blessedness

Consists in slavery—no.

ADAH. I have heard it said,

The Seraphs *love most*—Cherubim *know most*—

And this should be a Cherub—since he loves not

LUCIFER. And if the higher knowledge quenches love,

What must *he be* you cannot love when known?

Since the all-knowing Cherubim love least,

The Seraphs' love can be but ignorance

That they are not compatible, the doom

Of thy fond parents, for their daring, proves

Choose betwixt Love and Knowledge—since there is

No other choice your sire hath chosen already

His worship is but fear.

ADAH. Oh, Cain! choose Love

CAIN. For thee, my Adah, I choose not—It was

Born with me—but I love nought else.

ADAH. Our parents?

CAIN. Did they love us when they snatched from the Tree
That which hath driven us all from Paradise?

ADAH. We were not born then—and if we had been,
Should we not love them and our children, Cain?

CAIN. My little Enoch! and his lisping sister!
Could I but deem them happy, I would half
Forget—but it can never be forgotten

Through thrice a thousand generations! never
Shall men love the remembrance of the man
Who sowed the seed of evil and mankind

In the same hour! They plucked the tree of science
And sin—and, not content with their own sorrow

ACT I

Begot *me—thee*—and all the few that are,
 And all the unnumbered and innumerable
 Multitudes, millions, myriads, which may be,
 To inherit agonies accumulated
 By ages!—and *I* must be sire of such things!
 Thy beauty and thy love—my love and joy,
 The rapturous moment and the placid hour,
 All we love in our children and each other,
 But lead them and ourselves through many years
 Of sin and pain—or few, but still of sorrow,
 Interchecked with an instant of brief pleasure,
 To Death—the unknown! Methinks the Tree of Knowledge
 Hath not fulfilled its promise:—if they sinned,
 At least they ought to have known all things that are
 Of knowledge—and the mystery of Death.
 What do they know?—that they are miserable.
 What need of snakes and fruits to teach us that?

ADAH. I am not wretched, Cain, and if thou
 Wert happy

CAIN Be thou happy, then, alone—
 I will have nought to do with happiness,
 Which humbles me and mine.

ADAH. Alone I could not,
 Nor *would* be happy; but with those around us
 I think I could be so, despite of Death,
 Which, as I know it not, I dread not, though
 It seems an awful shadow—if I may
 Judge from what I have heard

LUCIFER. And thou couldst not
Alone, thou say'st, be happy?

ADAH. Alone! Oh, my God!
 Who could be happy and alone, or good?

CAIN

To me my solitude seems sin, unless
When I think how soon I shall see my brother,
His brother, and our children, and our parents

LUCIFER. Yet thy God is alone, and is he happy?
Lonely, and good?

ADAH. He is not so, he hath
The angels and the mortals to make happy,
And thus becomes so in diffusing joy
What else can joy be, but the spreading joy?

LUCIFER. Ask of your sire, the exile fresh from Eden,
Or of his first-born son ask your own heart,
It is not tranquil.

ADAH. Alas! no! and you—
Are you of Heaven?

LUCIFER If I am not, enquire
The cause of this all-spreading happiness
(Which you proclaim) of the all-great and good
Maker of life and living things, it is
His secret, and he keeps it We must bear,
And some of us resist—and both in vain,
His Seraphs say but it is worth the trial,
Since better may not be without. there is
A wisdom in the spirit, which directs
To right, as in the dim blue air the eye
Of you, young mortals, lights at once upon
The star which watches, welcoming the morn.

ADAH. It is a beautiful star, I love it for
its beauty.

LUCIFER. And why not adore?

ADAH. Our father
Adores the Invisible only.

LUCIFER. But the symbols

ACT I

Of the Invisible are the loveliest
Of what is visible, and yon bright star
Is leader of the host of Heaven.

ADAH Our father
Saith that he has beheld the God himself
Who made him and our mother.

LUCIFER. Hast *thou* seen him?

ADAH. Yes—in his works.

LUCIFER. But in his being?

ADAH. No—

Save in my father, who is God's own image ;
Or in his angels, who are like to thee—
And brighter, yet less beautiful and powerful
In seeming as the silent sunny noon,
All light, they look upon us ; but thou seem'st
Like an ethereal night, where long white clouds
Streak the deep purple, and unnumbered stars
Spangle the wonderful mysterious vault
With things that look as if they would be suns ;
So beautiful, unnumbered, and endearing,
Not dazzling, and yet drawing us to them,
They fill my eyes with tears, and so dost thou
Thou seem'st unhappy do not make us so,
And I will weep for thee.

LUCIFER. ¹ Alas! those tears!

Couldst thou but know what oceans will be shed

ADAH. By me?

LUCIFER. By all.

ADAH. What all?

LUCIFER The million millions—

The myriad myriads—the all-peopled earth—
The unpeopled earth—and the o'er-peopled Hell,

CAIN

Of which thy bosom is the germ.

ADAH

O Cain!

This spirit curseth us.

CAIN.

Let him say on,

Him will I follow.

ADAH

Whither?

LUCIFER.

To a place

Whence he shall come back to thee in an hour,

But in that hour see things of many days.

ADAH. How can that be?

LUCIFER.

Did not your Maker make

Out of old worlds this new one in few days?

And cannot I, who aided in this work,

Show in an hour what he hath made in many,

Or hath destroyed in few?

CAIN.

Lead on

ADAH

Will he,

In sooth, return within an hour?

LUCIFER.

He shall

With us acts are exempt from time, and we

Can crowd eternity into an hour,

Or stretch an hour into eternity.

We breathe not by a mortal measurement—

But that's a mystery. Cain, come on with me

ADAH. Will he return?

LUCIFER.

Aye, woman! he alone

Of mortals from that place (the first and last

Who shall return, save ONE) shall come back to thee,

To make that silent and expectant world

As populous as this. at present there

Are few inhabitants.

ADAH.

Where dwellest thou?

ACT I

LUCIFER. Throughout ll space. Where should I dwell? Where are Thy God or Gods—there am I: all things are Divided with me: Life and Death—and Time—Eternity—and heaven and earth—and that Which is not heaven nor earth, but peopled with Those who once peopled or shall people both—These are my realms! so that I do divide *His*, and possess a kingdom which is not *His*. If I were not that which I have said, Could I stand here? His angels are within Your vision.

ADAH. So they were when the fair serpent Spoke with our mother first.

LUCIFER. Cain! thou hast heard. If thou dost long for knowledge, I can satiate That thirst; nor ask thee to partake of fruits Which shall deprive thee of a single good The Conqueror has left thee. Follow me.

CAIN. Spirit, I have said it.

[*Exeunt* LUCIFER and CAIN.]

ADAH (*follows, exclaiming*). Cain! my brother! Cain!

CAIN

ACT II

SCENE I.—*The Abyss of Space*

CAIN. I tread on air, and sink not—yet I fear
To sink.

LUCIFER. Have faith in me, and thou shalt be
Borne on the air, of which I am the Prince.

CAIN. Can I do so without impiety?

LUCIFER. Believe—and sink not! doubt—and perish! thou
Would run the edict of the other God,
Who names me Demon to his angels; they
Echo the sound to miserable things,
Which, knowing nought beyond their shallow senses,
Worship the word which strikes their ear, and deem
Evil or good what is proclaimed to them
In their abasement. I will have none such
Worship or worship not, thou shalt behold
The worlds beyond thy little world, nor be
Amerced for doubts beyond thy little life,
With torture of *my* dooming. There will come
An hour, when, tossed upon some water-drops,
A man shall say to a man, “Believe in me,
And walk the waters,” and the man shall walk
The billows and be safe I will not say,
Believe in *me*, as a conditional creed
To save thee, but fly with me o’er the gulf
Of space an equal flight, and I will show
What thou dar’st not deny,—the history
Of past, and present, and of future worlds.

CAIN. Oh! God! or Demon! or whate’er thou art,
Is yon our earth?

LUCIFER. Dost thou not recognise

ACT II

The dust which formed your father ?

CAIN.

Can it be ?

Yon small blue circle, swinging in far ether,
With an inferior circlet near it still,
Which looks like that which lit our earthly night ?
Is this our Paradise ? Where are its walls,
And they who guard them ?

LUCIFER.

Point me out the site

Of Paradise

CAIN. How should I ? As we move

Like sunbeams onward, it grows small and smaller,
And as it waxes little, and then less,
Gathers a halo round it, like the light
Which shone the roundest of the stars, when I
Beheld them from the skirts of Paradise:
Methinks they both, as we recede from them,
Appear to join the innumerable stars
Which are around us, and, as we move on,
Increase their myriads.

LUCIFER.

And if there should be

Worlds greater than thine own—inhabited
By greater things—and they themselves far more
In number than the dust of thy dull earth,
Though multiplied to animated atoms,
All living—and all doomed to death—and wretched,
What wouldst thou think ?

CAIN.

I should be proud of thought

Which knew such things.

LUCIFER.

But if that high thought were

Linked to a servile mass of matter, and,
Knowing such things, aspiring to such things,
And science still beyond them, were chained down

CAIN

To the most gross and petty paltry wants,
All foul and fulsome, and the very best
Of thine enjoyments a sweet degradation,
A most enervating and filthy cheat
To lure thee on to the renewal of
Fresh souls and bodies, all foredoomed to be
As frail, and few so happy

CAIN. Spirit! I
Know nought of death, save as a dreadful thing
Of which I have heard my parents speak, as of
A hideous heritage I owe to them
No less than life—a heritage not happy,
If I may judge till now. But, Spirit! if
It be as thou hast said (and I within
Feel the prophetic torture of its truth),
Here let me die for to give birth to those
Who can but suffer many years, and die,
Methinks is merely propagating death,
And multiplying murder.

LUCIFER. Thou canst not
All die—there is what must survive.

CAIN. The Other
Spake not of this unto my father, when
He shut him forth from Paradise, with death
Written upon his forehead. But at least
Let what is mortal of me perish, that
I may be in the rest as angels are.

LUCIFER. *I am angelic*—wouldst thou be as I am?

CAIN. I know not what thou art. I see thy power,
And see thou show'st me things beyond *my* power,
Beyond all power of my born faculties,
Although inferior still to my desires

ACT II

And my conceptions.

LUCIFER.¹ What are they which dwell
So humbly in their pride, as to sojourn
With worms in clay?

CAIN. And what art thou who dwellest
So haughtily in spirit, and canst range
Nature and immortality—and yet
Seem'st sorrowful?

LUCIFER. I seem that which I am;
And therefore do I ask of thee, if thou
Wouldst be immortal?

CAIN. Thou hast said, I must be
Immortal in despite of me. I knew not
This until lately—but since it must be,
Let me, or happy or unhappy, learn
To anticipate my immortality.

LUCIFER. Thou didst before I came upon thee.

CAIN. How?

LUCIFER. By suffering

CAIN. And must torture be immortal?

LUCIFER. We and thy sons will try. But now, behold!
Is it not glorious?

CAIN Oh thou beautiful
And unimaginable ether! and
Ye multiplying masses of increased
And still-increasing lights! what are ye? what
Is this blue wilderness of interminable
Air, where ye roll along, as I have seen
The leaves along the limpid streams of Eden?
Is your course measured for ye? Or do ye
Sweep on in your unbounded revelry
Through an aerial universe of endless

Expansion—at which my soul aches to think—
Intoxicated with eternity?

Oh God! Oh Gods! or whatsoe'er ye are!

How beautiful ye are! how beautiful

Your works, or accidents, or whatsoe'er

They may be! Let me die, as atoms die,

(If that they die), or know ye in your might

And knowledge! My thoughts are not in this hour

Unworthy what I see, though my dust is,

Spirit! let me expire, or see them nearer.

LUCIFER. Art thou not nearer? look back to thine earth

CAIN. Where is it? I see nothing save a mass
Of most innumerable lights.

LUCIFER. Look there!

CAIN. I cannot see it.

LUCIFER. Yet it sparkles still.

CAIN. That!—yonder!

LUCIFER. Yea.

CAIN. And wilt thou tell me so?

Why, I have seen the fire-flies and fire-worms

Sprinkle the dusky groves and the green banks

In the dim twilight, brighter than yon world

Which bears them.

LUCIFER. Thou hast seen both worms and worlds,
Each bright and sparkling—what dost think of them?

CAIN. That they are beautiful in their own sphere,
And that the night, which makes both beautiful,

The little shining fire-fly in its flight,

And the immortal star in its great course,

Must both be guided.

LUCIFER. But by whom or what?

CAIN. Show me.

CAIN

Or *I* were, or the things which seem to us
Greater than either many things will have
No end; and some, which would pretend to have
Had no beginning, have had one as mean
As thou; and mightier things have been extinct
To make way for much meaner than we can
Surmise; for *moments* only and the *space*
Have been and must be all *unchangeable*.

But changes make not death, except to clay,
But thou art clay—and canst but comprehend
That which was clay, and such thou shalt behold

CAIN. Clay, Spirit! What thou wilt, I can survey.

LUCIFER. Away, then!

CAIN. But the lights fade from me fast,
And some till now grew larger as we approached,
And wore the look of worlds

LUCIFER And such they are.

CAIN. And Edens in them?

LUCIFER It may be.

CAIN. And men?

LUCIFER. Yea, or things higher.

CAIN. Aye! and serpents too?

LUCIFER. Wouldst thou have men without them?

must no reptiles

Breathe, save the erect ones?

CAIN. How the lights recede!

Where fly we?

LUCIFER. To the world of phantoms, which
Are beings past, and shadows still to come

CAIN. But it grows dark, and dark—the stars are gone

LUCIFER. And yet thou seest.

CAIN. 'Tis a fearful light!

ACT II

No sun—no moon—no lights innumerable—
The very blue of the empurpled night
Fades to a dreary twilight—yet I see
Huge dusky masses; but unlike the worlds
We were approaching, which, begirt with light,
Seemed full of life even when their atmosphere
Of light gave way, and showed them taking shapes
Unequal, of deep valleys and vast mountains;
And some emitting sparks, and some displaying
Enormous liquid plains, and some begirt
With luminous belts, and floating moons, which took,
Like them, the features of fair earth —instead,
All here seems dark and dreadful.

LUCIFER. But distinct.

Thou seekest to behold Death, and dead things?

CAIN. I seek it not; but as I know there are
Such, and that my sire's sin makes him and me,
And all that we inherit, liable
To such, I would behold, at once, what I
Must one day see perforce

LUCIFER. Behold!

CAIN. 'Tis darkness!

LUCIFER. And so it shall be ever, but we will
Unfold its gates!

CAIN. Enormous vapours roll
Apart—what's this?

LUCIFER. Enter!

CAIN. Can I return?

LUCIFER. Return! be sure: how else should Death
be peopled?

Its present realm is thin to what it will be,
Through thee and thine.

ACT II

Or the dull mass of life, that, being life,
Could not retain, but needs must forfeit it—
Even for the innocent!

LUCIFER. Dost thou curse thy father?

CAIN. Cursed he not me in giving me my birth?
Cursed he not me before my birth, in daring
To pluck the fruit forbidden?

LUCIFER. Thou say'st well.
The curse is mutual 'twixt thy sire and thee—
But for thy sons and brother?

CAIN. Let them share it
With me, their sire and brother! What else is
Bequeathed to me? I leave them my inheritance.
Oh, ye interminable gloomy realms
Of swimming shadows and enormous shapes,
Some fully shown, some indistinct, and all
Mighty and melancholy—what are ye?
Live ye, or have ye lived?

LUCIFER. Somewhat of both.

CAIN. Then what is Death?

LUCIFER. What? Hath not he who made ye
Said 'tis another life?

CAIN. Till now he hath
Said nothing, save that all shall die.

LUCIFER. Perhaps
He one day will unfold that further secret.

CAIN. Happy the day!

LUCIFER. Yes; happy! when unfolded,
Through agonies unspeakable, and clogged
With agonies eternal, to innumerable
Yet unborn myriads of unconscious atoms,
All to be animated for this only!

CAIN

CAIN. What are these mighty phantoms which I see
 Floating around me?—They wear not the form
 Of the Intelligences I have seen
 Round our regretted and unentered Eden,
 Nor wear the form of man as I have viewed it
 In Adam's and in Abel's, and in mine,
 Nor in my sister-bride's, nor in my children's:
 And yet they have an aspect, which, though not
 Of men nor angels, looks like something, which,
 If not the last, rose higher than the first,
 Haughty, and high, and beautiful, and full
 Of seeming strength, but of inexplicable
 Shape; for I never saw such. They bear not
 The wing of Seraph, nor the face of man,
 Nor form of mightiest brute, nor aught that is
 Now breathing; mighty yet and beautiful
 As the most beautiful and mighty which
 Live, and yet so unlike them, that I scarce
 Can call them living

LUCIFER. Yet they lived.

CAIN. Where?

LUCIFER. Where

Thou livest.

CAIN. When?

LUCIFER. On what thou callest earth
 They did inhabit.

CAIN. Adam is the first.

LUCIFER. Of thine, I grant thee—but too mean to be
 The last of these.

CAIN. And what are they?

LUCIFER. That which
 Thou shalt be.

ACT II

CAIN. But what *were* they?

LUCIFER. Living, high,
Intelligent, good, great, and glorious things,
As much superior unto all thy sire
Adam could e'er have been in Eden, as
The sixty-thousandth generation shall be,
In its dull damp degeneracy, to
Thee and thy son;—and how weak they are, judge
By thy own flesh.

CAIN Ah me! and did *they* perish?

LUCIFER. Yes, from their earth, as thou wilt fade
from thine.

CAIN. But was *mine* theirs?

LUCIFER. It was.

CAIN. But not as now.

It is too little and too lowly to
Sustain such creatures

LUCIFER. True, it was more glorious.

CAIN And wherefore did it fall?

LUCIFER. Ask him *who* fells.

CAIN. But how?

LUCIFER. By a most crushing and inexorable
Destruction and disorder of the elements,
Which struck a world to chaos, as a chaos
Subsiding has struck out a world; such things,
Though rare in time, are frequent in eternity —
Pass on, and gaze upon the past.

CAIN 'Tis awful!

LUCIFER. And true. Behold these phantoms! they
were once
Material as thou art.

CAIN. And must I be

CAIN

Like them?

LUCIFER. Let him who made thee answer that
I show thee what thy predecessors are,
And what they *were* thou feelest, in degree
Inferior as thy petty feelings and
Thy pettier portion of the immortal part
Of high intelligence and earthly strength.
What ye in common have with what they had
Is Life, and what ye *shall* have—Death the rest
Of your poor attributes is such as suits
Reptiles engendered out of the subsiding
Slime of a mighty universe, crushed into
A scarcely-yet shaped planet, peopled with
Things whose enjoyment was to be in blindness—
A Paradise of Ignorance, from which
Knowledge was barred as poison. But behold
What these superior beings are or were,
Or, if it irk thee, turn thee back and till
The earth, thy task—I'll waft thee there in safety.

CAIN. No I'll stay here

LUCIFER. How long?

CAIN.

For ever! Since

I must one day return here from the earth,
I rather would remain; I am sick of all
That dust has shown me—let me dwell in shadows.

LUCIFER. It cannot be—thou now beholdest as
A vision that which is reality.
To make thyself fit for this dwelling, thou
Must pass through what the things thou seest have passed—
The gates of Death.

CAIN. By what gate have we entered
Even now?

ACT II

LUCIFER. By mine! But, plighted to return,
My spirit buoys thee up to breathe in regions
Where all is breathless save thyself. Gaze on;
But do not think to dwell here till thine hour
Is come!

CAIN. And these, too—can they ne'er repass
To earth again?

LUCIFER *Their* earth is gone for ever—
So changed by its convulsion, they would not
Be conscious to a single present spot
Of its new scarcely hardened surface—'twas—
Oh, what a beautiful world it *was*!

CAIN. And is!
It is not with the earth, though I must till it,
I feel at war—but that I may not profit
By what it bears of beautiful, untoiling,
Nor gratify my thousand swelling thoughts
With knowledge, nor allay my thousand fears
Of Death and Life.

LUCIFER What thy world is, thou seest,
But canst not comprehend the shadow of
That which it was.

CAIN. And those enormous creatures,
Phantoms inferior in intelligence
(At least so seeming) to the things we have passed,
Resembling somewhat the wild habitants
Of the deep woods of earth, the hugest which
Roar nightly in the forest, but ten-fold
In magnitude and terror, taller than
The cherub-guarded walls of Eden—with
Eyes flashing like the fiery swords which fence them—
And tusks projecting like the trees stripped of

CAIN

Their bark and branches—what were they?

LUCIFER.

That which

The Mammoth is in thy world,—but these lie

By myriads underneath its surface

CAIN.

But

None on it?

LUCIFER. No. for thy frail race to war
With them would render the curse on it useless—
'T would be destroyed so early.

CAIN.

But why *war*?

LUCIFER. You have forgotten the denunciation
Which drove your race from Eden—war with all things,
And death to all things, and disease to most things,
And pangs, and bitterness; these were the fruits
Of the forbidden tree.

CAIN.

But animals—

Did they, too, eat of it, that they must die?

LUCIFER. Your Maker told ye, *they* were made for you,
As you for him.—You would not have their doom
Superior to your own? Had Adam not
Fallen, all had stood.

CAIN.

Alas! the hopeless wretches!

They too must share my sire's fate, like his sons;
Like them, too, without having shared the apple;
Like them, too, without the so dear-bought *knowledge*!
It was a lying tree—for we *know* nothing.
At least it *promised knowledge* at the *price*
Of death—but *knowledge* still— but what *knows* man?

LUCIFER. It may be death leads to the *highest* knowledge
And being of all things the sole thing certain,
At least leads to the *surest* science: therefore
The Tree was true, though deadly.

ACT II

CAIN. These dim realms!
I see them, but I know them not.

LUCIFER. Because
Thy hour is yet afar, and matter cannot
Comprehend spirit wholly—but 'tis something
To know there are such realms.

CAIN. We knew already
That there was death.

LUCIFER But not what was beyond it.

CAIN. Nor know I now.

LUCIFER. Thou knowest that there is
A state, and many states beyond thine own—
And this thou knewest not this morn.

CAIN. But all
Seems dim and shadowy.

LUCIFER. Be content; it will
Seem clearer to thine immortality.

CAIN. And yon immeasurable liquid space
Of glorious azure which floats on beyond us,
Which looks like water, and which I should deem
The river which flows out of Paradise
Past my own dwelling, but that it is bankless
And boundless, and of an ethereal hue—
What is it?

LUCIFER. There is still some such on earth,
Although inferior, and thy children shall
Dwell near it—'tis the phantasm of an Ocean.

CAIN. 'Tis like another world, a liquid sun—
And those inordinate creatures sporting o'er
Its shining surface?

LUCIFER. Are its inhabitants,
The past Leviathans.

CAIN

CAIN. And yon immense
Serpent, which rears his dripping mane and vasty
Head ten times higher than the haughtiest cedar
Forth from the abyss, looking as he could coil
Himself around the orbs we lately looked on—
Is he not of the kind which basked beneath
The Tree in Eden?

LUCIFER. Eve, thy mother, best
Can tell what shape of serpent tempted her

CAIN. This seems too terrible. No doubt the other
Had more of beauty.

LUCIFER. Hast thou ne'er beheld him?

CAIN. Many of the same kind (at least so called)
But never that precisely, which persuaded
The fatal fruit, nor even of the same aspect.

LUCIFER. Your father saw him not?

CAIN No 'twas my mother
Who tempted him—she tempted by the serpent

LUCIFER. Good man! whene'er thy wife, or thy son's wives,
Tempt thee or them to aught that's new or strange,
Be sure thou seest first who hath tempted *them*!

CAIN. Thy precept comes too late there is no more
For serpents to tempt women to.

LUCIFER. But there
Are some things still which woman may tempt man to,
And man tempt woman:—let thy sons look to it!
My counsel is a kind one; for 'tis even
Given chiefly at my own expense, 'tis true,
'Twill not be followed, so there's little lost

CAIN. I understand not this.

LUCIFER. The happier thou!—
Thy world and thou are still too young! Thou thinkest

ACT II

Thyself most wicked and unhappy—is it
Not so?

CAIN. For crime, I know not; but for pain,
I have felt much.

LUCIFER. First-born of the first man!
Thy present state of sin—and thou art evil,
Of sorrow—and thou sufferest, are both Eden
In all its innocence compared to what
Thou shortly may'st be, and that state again,
In its redoubled wretchedness, a Paradise
To what thy sons' sons' sons, accumulating
In generations like to dust (which they
In fact but add to), shall endure and do.—
Now let us back to earth!

CAIN. And wherefore didst thou
Lead me here only to inform me this?

LUCIFER. Was not thy quest for knowledge?

CAIN. Yes—as being
The road to happiness!

LUCIFER. If truth be so,
Thou hast it.

CAIN. Then my father's God did well
When he prohibited the fatal Tree.

LUCIFER. But had done better in not planting it
But ignorance of evil doth not save
From evil, it must still roll on the same,
A part of all things.

CAIN. Not of all things. No—
I'll not believe it—for I thirst for good.

LUCIFER. And who and what doth not? *Who* covets evil
For its own bitter sake?—*None*—nothing! 'tis
The leaven of all life, and lifelessness

CAIN

CAIN. Within those glorious orbs which we behold,
Distant, and dazzling, and innumerable,
Ere we came down into this phantom realm,
Ill cannot come: they are too beautiful

LUCIFER. Thou hast seen them from afar.

CAIN. And what of that?

Distance can but diminish glory—they,
When nearer, must be more ineffable.

LUCIFER. Approach the things of earth most beautiful,
And judge their beauty near

CAIN. I have done this—

The loveliest thing I know is loveliest nearest.

LUCIFER. Then there must be delusion. —What is that
Which being nearest to thine eyes is still
More beautiful than beauteous things remote?

CAIN My sister Adah. —All the stars of heaven,
The deep blue noon of night, lit by an orb
Which looks a spirit, or a spirit's world—
The hues of twilight—the Sun's gorgeous coming—
His setting, indescribable, which fills
My eyes with pleasant tears as I behold
Him sink, and feel my heart float softly with him
Along that western paradise of clouds—
The forest shade, the green bough, the bird's voice—
The vesper bird's, which seems to sing of love,
And mingles with the song of Cherubim,
As the day closes over Eden's walls,—
All these are nothing, to my eyes and heart,
Like Adah's face: I turn from earth and heaven
To gaze on it

LUCIFER. 'Tis fair as frail mortality,
In the first dawn and bloom of young creation,

ACT II

And earliest embraces of earth's parents,
Can make its offspring; still it is delusion.

CAIN. You think so, being not her brother.

LUCIFER.

Mortal!

My brotherhood's with those who have no children.

CAIN. Then thou canst have no fellowship with us.

LUCIFER. It may be that thine own shall be for me.

But if thou dost possess a beautiful

Being beyond all beauty in thine eyes,

Why art thou wretched?

CAIN.

Why do I exist?

Why art *thou* wretched? why are all things so?

Ev'n he who made us must be, as the maker

Of things unhappy! To produce destruction

Can surely never be the task of joy,

And yet my sire says he's omnipotent

Then why is Evil—he being Good? I asked

This question of my father; and he said,

Because this Evil only was the path

To Good. Strange Good, that must arise from, out

Its deadly opposite. I lately saw

A lamb stung by a reptile. the poor suckling

Lay foaming on the earth, beneath the vain

And piteous bleating of its restless dam;

My father plucked some herbs, and laid them to

The wound; and by degrees the helpless wretch

Resumed its careless life, and rose to drain

The mother's milk, who o'er it tremulous

Stood licking its reviving limbs with joy.

Behold, my son! said Adam, how from Evil

Springs Good!

LUCIFER. What didst thou answer?

CAIN

CAIN. Nothing, for
He is my father but I thought, that 'twere
A better portion for the animal
Never to have been *stung at all*, than to
Purchase renewal of its little life
With agonies unutterable, though
Dispelled by antidotes.

LUCIFER. But as thou saidst
Of all belovéd things thou lovest her
Who shared thy mother's milk, and giveth hers
Unto thy children—

CAIN. Most assuredly:
What should I be without her?

LUCIFER. What am I?

CAIN Dost thou love nothing?

LUCIFER. What does thy God love?

CAIN All things, my father says; but I confess
I see it not in their allotment here.

LUCIFER. And, therefore, thou canst not see if I love
Or no—except some vast and general purpose,
To which particular things must melt like snows

CAIN. Snows! what are they?

LUCIFER. Be happier in not knowing
What thy remoter offspring must encounter;
But bask beneath the clime which knows no winter.

CAIN. But dost thou not love something like thyself?

LUCIFER. And dost thou love *thyself*?

CAIN. Yes, but love more
What makes my feelings more endurable,
And is more than myself, because I love it!

LUCIFER. Thou lovest it, because 'tis beautiful,
As was the apple in thy mother's eye;

ACT II

And when it ceases to be so, thy love
Will cease, like any other appetite.

CAIN. Cease to be beautiful! how can that be?

LUCIFER. With time.

CAIN. But time has passed, and hitherto
Even Adam and my mother both are fair.
Not fair like Adah and the Seraphim—
But very fair.

LUCIFER. All that must pass away
In them and her.

CAIN I'm sorry for it, but
Cannot conceive my love for her the less
And when her beauty disappears, methinks
He who creates all beauty will lose more
Than me in seeing perish such a work.

LUCIFER. I pity thee who lovest what must perish.

CAIN And I thee who lov'st nothing.

LUCIFER. And thy brother—
Sits he not near thy heart?

CAIN. Why should he not?

LUCIFER. Thy father loves him well—so does thy God

CAIN And so do I.

LUCIFER. 'Tis well and meekly done

CAIN Meekly!

LUCIFER. He is the second born of flesh,
And is his mother's favourite.

CAIN. Let him keep
Her favour, since the Serpent was the first
To win it.

LUCIFER. And his father's?

CAIN What is that
To me? should I not love that which all love?

CAIN

LUCIFER. And the Jehovah—the indulgent Lord,
And bounteous planter of barred Paradise—
He, too, looks smilingly on Abel.

CAIN. I

Ne'er saw him, and I know not if he smiles.

LUCIFER. But you have seen his angels

CAIN. Rarely

LUCIFER. But

Sufficiently to see they love your brother

His sacrifices are acceptable

CAIN So be they! wherefore speak to me of this?

LUCIFER. Because thou hast thought of this ere now.

CAIN. And if

I *have* thought, why recall a thought that—(*he pauses as agitated*)

—Spirit!

Here we are in *thy* world; speak not of *mine*

Thou hast shown me wonders thou hast shown me those

Mighty Pre-Adamites who walked the earth

Of which ours is the wreck: thou hast pointed out

Myriads of starry worlds, of which our own

Is the dim and remote companion, in

Infinity of life thou hast shown me shadows

Of that existence with the dreaded name

Which my sire brought us—Death; thou hast shown me much

But not all show me where Jehovah dwells,

In his especial Paradise—or *thine*

Where is it?

LUCIFER. *Here*, and o'er all space

CAIN. But ye

Have some allotted dwelling—as all things;

Clay has its earth, and other worlds their tenants;

All temporary breathing creatures their

ACT II

Peculiar element; and things which have
 Long ceased to breathe *our* breath, have theirs, thou say'st;
 And the Jehovah and thyself have thine—
 Ye do not dwell together?

LUCIFER. No, we reign
 Together; but our dwellings are asunder.

CAIN. Would there were only one of ye! perchance
 An unity of purpose might make union
 In elements which seem now jarred in storms.
 How came ye, being Spirits wise and infinite,
 To separate? Are ye not as brethren in
 Your essence—and your nature, and your glory?

LUCIFER. Art not thou Abel's brother?

CAIN. We are brethren,
 And so we shall remain, but were it not so,
 Is spirit like to flesh? can it fall out—
 Infinity with Immortality?
 Jarred and turning space to misery—
 For what?

LUCIFER. To reign.

CAIN. Did ye not tell me that
 Ye are both eternal?

LUCIFER. Yea!

CAIN. And what I have seen—
 Yon blue immensity, is boundless?

LUCIFER. Aye.

CAIN. And cannot ye both *reign*, then?—is there not
 Enough?—why should ye differ?

LUCIFER. We *both* reign.

CAIN. But one of you makes evil.

LUCIFER Which?

CAIN. Thou! for

CAIN

If thou canst do man good, why dost thou not?

LUCIFER. And why not he who made? *I made ye not,*
Ye are *his* creatures, and not mine

CAIN. Then leave us

His creatures, as thou say'st we are, or show me
Thy dwelling, or *his* dwelling

LUCIFER. I could show thee

Both; but the time will come thou shalt see one
Of them for evermore

CAIN. And why not now?

LUCIFER. Thy human mind hath scarcely grasp to gather
The little I have shown thee into calm

And clear thought. and *thou* wouldst go on aspiring
To the great double Mysteries! the *two Principles*!

And gaze upon them on their secret thrones!
Dust! limit thy ambition; for to see

Either of these would be for thee to perish!

CAIN. And let me perish, so I see them!

LUCIFER. There

The son of her who snatched the apple spake!

But thou wouldst only perish, and not see them;

That sight is for the other state.

CAIN. Of Death?

LUCIFER. That is the prelude.

CAIN. Then I dread it less,

Now that I know it leads to something definite.

LUCIFER. And now I will convey thee to thy world,
Where thou shalt multiply the race of Adam,

Eat, drink, toil, tremble, laugh, weep, sleep—and die!

CAIN. And to what end have I beheld these things
Which thou hast shown me?

LUCIFER. Didst thou not require

ACT II

Knowledge? And have I not, in what I showed,
Taught thee to know thyself?

CAIN.

Alas! I seem

Nothing.

LUCIFER. And this should be the human sum
Of knowledge, to know mortal nature's nothingness,
Bequeath that science to thy children, and
'Twill spare them many tortures.

CAIN.

Haughty spirit!

Thou speak'st it proudly; but thyself, though proud,
Hast a superior.

LUCIFER. No! By heaven, which he
Holds, and the abyss, and the immensity
Of worlds and life, which I hold with him—No!
I have a Victor—true; but no superior.
Homage he has from all—but none from me
I battle it against him, as I battled
In highest Heaven. Through all Eternity,
And the unfathomable gulfs of Hades,
And the interminable realms of space,
And the infinity of endless ages,
All, all, will I dispute! And world by world,
And star by star, and universe by universe,
Shall tremble in the balance, till the great
Conflict shall cease, if ever it shall cease,
Which it ne'er shall, till he or I be quenched!
And what can quench our immortality,
Or mutual and irrevocable hate?
He as a conqueror will call the conquered
Evil, but what will be the *Good* he gives?
Were I the victor, *his* works would be deemed
The only evil ones. And you, ye new

CAIN

And scarce-born mortals, what have been his gifts
To you already, in your little world?

CAIN. But few; and some of those but bitter.

LUCIFER

Back

With me, then, to thine earth, and try the rest
Of his celestial boons to you and yours.
Evil and Good are things in their own essence,
And not made good or evil by the Giver,
But if he gives you good—so call him, if
Evil springs from *him*, do not name it *mine*,
Till ye know better its true fount, and judge
Not by words, though of Spirits, but the fruits
Of your existence, such as it must be.
One good gift has the fatal apple given,—
Your *reason*—let it not be overswayed
By tyrannous threats to force you into faith
'Gainst all external sense and inward feeling
Think and endure,—and form an inner world
In your own bosom—where the outward fails,
So shall you nearer be the spiritual
Nature, and war triumphant with your own

[*They disappear.*]

ACT III

SCENE I.—*The Earth, near Eden, as in Act I.*

Enter CAIN and ADAH.

ADAH. Hush! tread softly, Cain!
CAIN. I will—but wherefore?

ADAH. Our little Enoch sleeps upon yon bed
Of leaves, beneath the cypress.

CAIN. Cypress! 'tis
A gloomy tree, which looks as if it mourned
O'er what it shadows; wherefore didst thou choose it
For our child's canopy?

ADAH. Because its branches
Shut out the sun like night, and therefore seemed
Fitting to shadow slumber

CAIN. Aye, the last—
And longest; but no matter—lead me to him.
[*They go up to the child.*]

How lovely he appears! his little cheeks,
In their pure incarnation, vying with
The rose leaves strewn beneath them.

ADAH And his lips, too,
How beautifully parted! No, you shall not
Kiss him, at least not now. he will awake soon—
His hour of mid-day rest is nearly over;
But it were pity to disturb him till
'Tis closed.

CAIN. You have said well; I will contain
My heart till then. He smiles, and sleeps!—sleep on,
And smile, thou little, young inheritor
Of a world scarce less young: sleep on, and smile!
Thine are the hours and days when both are cheering
And innocent! *thou* hast not plucked the fruit—

CAIN

Thou know'st not thou art naked! Must the time
Come thou shalt be amerced for sins unknown,
Which were not thine nor mine? But now sleep on!
His cheeks are reddening into deeper smiles,
And shining lids are trembling o'er his long
Lashes, dark as the cypress which waves o'er them,
Half open, from beneath them the clear blue
Laughs out, although in slumber. He must dream—
Of what? Of Paradise!—Aye! dream of it,
My disinherited boy! 'Tis but a dream,
For never more thyself, thy sons, nor fathers,
Shall walk in that forbidden place of joy!

ADAH. Dear Cain! Nay, do not whisper o'er our son
Such melancholy yearnings o'er the past
Why wilt thou always mourn for Paradise?
Can we not make another?

CAIN.

Where?

ADAH

Here, or

Where'er thou wilt where'er thou art, I feel not
The want of this so much regretted Eden
Have I not thee, our boy, our sire, and brother,
And Zillah—our sweet sister, and our Eve,
To whom we owe so much besides our birth?

CAIN Yes—Death, too, is amongst the debts we owe her

ADAH Cain! that proud Spirit, who withdrew thee hence,
Hath saddened thine still deeper I had hoped
The promised wonders which thou hast beheld,
Visions, thou say'st, of past and present worlds,
Would have composed thy mind into the calm
Of a contented knowledge; but I see
Thy guide hath done thee evil still I thank him,
And can forgive him all, that he so soon

ACT III

Hath given thee back to us

CAIN

So soon?

ADAH.

'Tis scarcely

Two hours since ye departed two *long* hours

To *me*, but only *hours* upon the sun.

CAIN. And yet I have approached that sun, and seen
Worlds which he once shone on, and never more
Shall light, and worlds he never lit. methought
Years had rolled o'er my absence

ADAH

Hardly hours.

CAIN. The mind then hath capacity of time,
And measures it by that which it beholds,
Pleasing or painful; little or almighty.
I had beheld the immemorial works
Of endless beings; skirred extinguished worlds,
And, gazing on eternity, methought
I had borrowed more by a few drops of ages
From its immensity. but now I feel
My littleness again. Well said the Spirit,
That I was nothing!

ADAH

Wherefore said he so?

Jehovah said not that.

CAIN.

No *he* contents him

With making us the *nothing* which we are,
And after flattering dust with glimpses of
Eden and Immortality, resolves
It back to dust again—for what?

ADAH

Thou know'st—

Even for our parents' error

CAIN

What is that

To us? they sinned, then *let them* die!

ADAH. Thou hast not spoken well, nor is that thought

CAIN

Thy own, but of the Spirit who was with thee
Would I could die for them, so *they* might live!

CAIN. Why, so say I—provided that one victim
Might satiate the Insatiable of life,
And that our little rosy sleeper there
Might never taste of death nor human sorrow,
Nor hand it down to those who spring from him

ADAH. How know we that some such atonement one day
May not redeem our race?

CAIN. By sacrificing
The harmless for the guilty? what atonement
Were there? why, *we* are innocent. what have we
Done, that we must be victims for a deed
Before our birth, or need have victims to
Atone for this mysterious, nameless sin—
If it be such a sin to seek for knowledge?

ADAH. Alas! thou sinnest now, my Cain: thy words
Sound impious in mine ears.

CAIN. Then leave me!

ADAH. Never,
Though thy God left thee.

CAIN. Say, what have we here?

ADAH. Two altars, which our brother Abel made
During thine absence, whereupon to offer
A sacrifice to God on thy return.

CAIN. And how knew *he*, that I would be so ready
With the burnt offerings, which he daily brings
With a meek brow, whose base humility
Shows more of fear than worship—as a bribe
To the Créator?

ADAH. Surely, 'tis well done.

CAIN. One altar may suffice; I have no offering.

ACT III

ADAH. The fruits of the earth, the early, beautiful,
Blossom and bud, and bloom of flowers and fruits,
These are a goodly offering to the Lord,
Given with a gentle and a contrite spirit.

CAIN. I have toiled, and tilled, and sweaten in the sun,
According to the curse:—must I do more?
For what should I be gentle? for a war
With all the elements ere they will yield
The bread we eat? For what must I be grateful?
For being dust, and grovelling in the dust,
Till I return to dust? If I am nothing—
For nothing shall I be an hypocrite,
And seem well-pleased with pain? For what should I
Be contrite? for my father's sin, already
Expiate with what we all have undergone,
And to be more than expiated by
The ages prophesied, upon our seed.
Little deems our young blooming sleeper, there,
The germs of an eternal misery
To myriads is within him! better 'twere
I snatched him in his sleep, and dashed him gainst
The rocks, than let him live to—

ADAH. Oh, my God!
Touch not the child—my child—*thy* child! Oh, Cain!

CAIN. Fear not! for all the stars, and all the power
Which sways them, I would not accost yon infant
With ruder greeting than a father's kiss.

ADAH. Then, why so awful in thy speech?

CAIN. I said,
'Twere better that he ceased to live, than give
Life to so much of sorrow as he must
Endure, and, harder still, bequeath, but since

CAIN

That saying jars you, let us only say—
'Twere better that he never had been born

ADAH Oh, do not say so! Where were then the joys,
The mother's joys of watching, nourishing,
And loving him? Soft! he awakes Sweet Enoch!

[*She goes to the child.*]

Oh, Cain! look on him; see how full of life,
Of strength, of bloom, of beauty, and of joy—
How like to me—how like to thee, when gentle,
For *then* we are *all* alike, is't not so, Cain?
Mother, and sire, and son, our features are
Reflected in each other, as they are
In the clear waters, when *they* are *gentle*, and
When *thou* art *gentle* Love us, then, my Cain!
And love thyself for our sakes, for we love thee.
Look! how he laughs and stretches out his arms,
And opens wide his blue eyes upon thine,
To hail his father, while his little form
Flutters as winged with joy. Talk not of pain!
The childless cherubs well might envy thee
The pleasures of a parent! Bless him, Cain!
As yet he hath no words to thank thee, but
His heart will, and thine own too

CAIN.

Bless thee, boy!

If that a mortal blessing may avail thee,
To save thee from the serpent's curse!

ADAH

It shall.

Surely a father's blessing may avert
A reptile's subtlety

CAIN.

Of that I doubt,

But bless him ne'er the less.

ADAH.

Our brother comes.

ACT III

CAIN. Thy brother Abel.

Enter ABEL.

ABEL. Welcome, Cain! My brother,
The peace of God be on thee!

CAIN. Abel, hail!

ABEL. Our sister tells me that thou hast been wandering,
In high communion with a Spirit, far
Beyond our wonted range. Was he of those
We have seen and spoken with, like to our father?

CAIN. No.

ABEL. Why then commune with him? he may be
A foe to the Most High.

CAIN. And friend to man.
Has the Most High been so—if you term him?

ABEL. *Term him!* your words are strange to-day, my brother.
My sister Adah, leave us for awhile—
We mean to sacrifice.

ADAH. Farewell, my Cain;
But first embrace thy son. May his soft spirit,
And Abel's pious ministry, recall thee
To peace and holiness!

[Exit ADAH, with her child.]

ABEL. Where hast thou been?

CAIN. I know not

ABEL. Nor what thou hast seen?

CAIN The dead—

The immortal—the unbounded—the omnipotent—
The overpowering mysteries of space—
The innumerable worlds that were and are—
A whirlwind of such overwhelming things,
Suns, moons, and earths, upon their loud-voiced spheres

CAIN

Singing in thunder round me, as have made me
Unfit for mortal converse: leave me, Abel.

ABEL. Thine eyes are flashing with unnatural light—
Thy cheek is flushed with an unnatural hue—
Thy words are fraught with an unnatural sound—
What may this mean?

CAIN. It means—I pray thee, leave me

ABEL. Not till we have prayed and sacrificed together.

CAIN. Abel, I pray thee, sacrifice alone—
Jehovah loves thee well

ABEL. *Both* well, I hope.

CAIN. But thee the better. I care not for that;
Thou art fitter for his worship than I am;
Revere him, then—but let it be alone—
At least, without me.

ABEL. Brother, I should ill
Deserve the name of our great father's son,
If, as my elder, I revered thee not,
And in the worship of our God, called not
On thee to join me, and precede me in
Our priesthood—'tis thy place.

CAIN. But I have ne'er
Asserted it.

ABEL. The more my grief, I pray thee
To do so now: thy soul seems labouring in
Some strong delusion, it will calm thee

CAIN. No,
Nothing can calm me more. *Calm!* say I? Never
Knew I what calm was in the soul, although
I have seen the elements stilled. My Abel, leave me!
Or let me leave thee to thy pious purpose.

ABEL. Neither; we must perform our task together.

ACT III

Spurn me not

CAIN. If it must be so—well, then,
What shall I do?

ABEL. Choose one of those two altars.

CAIN. Choose for me: they to me are so much turf
And stone.

ABEL. Choose thou!

CAIN. I have chosen.

ABEL. 'Tis the highest,
And suits thee, as the elder. Now prepare
Thine offerings.

CAIN. Where are thine?

ABEL. Behold them here—
The firstlings of the flock, and fat thereof—
A shepherd's humble offering.

CAIN. I have no flocks;
I am a tiller of the ground, and must
Yield what it yieldeth to my toil—its fruit:

[He gathers fruits.]

Behold them in their various bloom and ripeness.

[They dress their altars, and kindle a flame upon them]

ABEL. My brother, as the elder, offer first
Thy prayer and thanksgiving with sacrifice.

CAIN. No—I am new to this, lead thou the way,
And I will follow—as I may.

ABEL (*knelling*). Oh, God!
Who made us, and who breathed the breath of life
Within our nostrils, who hath blessed us,
And spared, despite our father's sin, to make
His children all lost, as they might have been,
Had not thy justice been so tempered with
The mercy which is thy delight, as to

CAIN

Accord a pardon like a Paradise,
 Compared with our great crimes — Sole Lord of light!
 Of good, and glory, and eternity!
 Without whom all were evil, and with whom
 Nothing can err, except to some good end
 Of thine omnipotent benevolence!
 Inscrutable, but still to be fulfilled!
 Accept from out thy humble first of shepherds'
 First of the first-born flocks—an offering,
 In itself nothing—as what offering can be
 Aught unto thee?—but yet accept it for
 The thanksgiving of him who spreads it in
 The face of thy high heaven—bowing his own
 Even to the dust, of which he is—in honour
 Of thee, and of thy name, for evermore!

CAIN (*standing erect during this speech*). Spirit! whate'er
 or whosoe'er thou art,
 Omnipotent, it may be—and, if good,
 Shown in the exemption of thy deeds from evil,
 Jehovah upon earth! and God in heaven!
 And it may be with other names, because
 Thine attributes seem many, as thy works —
 If thou must be propitiated with prayers,
 Take them! If thou must be induced with altars,
 And softened with a sacrifice, receive them;
 Two beings here erect them unto thee
 If thou lov'st blood, the shepherd's shrine, which smokes
 On my right hand, hath shed it for thy service
 In the first of his flock, whose limbs now reek
 In sanguinary incense to thy skies,
 Or, if the sweet and blooming fruits of earth,
 And milder seasons, which the unstained turf

ACT III

I spread them on now offers in the face
 Of the broad sun which ripened them, may seem
 Good to thee, inasmuch as they have not
 Suffered in limb or life, and rather form
 A sample of thy works, than supplication
 To look on ours! If a shrine without victim,
 And altar without gore, may win thy favour,
 Look on it! and for him who dresseth it,
 He is—such as thou mad'st him, and seeks nothing
 Which must be won by kneeling if he's evil,
 Strike him! thou art omnipotent, and may'st—
 For what can he oppose? If he be good,
 Strike him, or spare him, as thou wilt! since all
 Rests upon thee; and Good and Evil seem
 To have no power themselves, save in thy will;
 And whether that be good or ill I know not,
 Not being omnipotent, nor fit to judge
 Omnipotence—but merely to endure
 Its mandate, which thus far I have endured

*[The fire upon the altar of ABEL kindles into a column
 of the brightest flame, and ascends to heaven; while a
 whirlwind throws down the altar of CAIN, and scatters
 the fruits abroad upon the earth.]*

ABEL (*kneeling*). Oh, brother, pray! Jehovah's wroth
 with thee.

CAIN. Why so?

ABEL. Thy fruits are scattered on the earth.

CAIN From earth they came, to earth let them return;
 Their seed will bear fresh fruit there ere the summer:
 Thy burnt flesh-offering prospers better; see
 How Heaven licks up the flames, when thick with blood!

ABEL Think not upon my offering's acceptance,

CAIN

But make another of thine own before
It is too late.

CAIN. I will build no more altars,
Nor suffer any. —

ABEL (*rising*) Cain! what meanest thou?

CAIN. To cast down yon vile flatterer of the clouds,
The smoky harbinger of thy dull prayers—
Thine altar, with its blood of lambs and kids,
Which fed on milk, to be destroyed in blood

ABEL (*opposing him*) Thou shalt not — add not impious
works to impious

Words! let that altar stand—'tis hallowed now
By the immortal pleasure of Jehovah,
In his acceptance of the victims.

CAIN. *His!*

His pleasure! what was his high pleasure in
The fumes of scorching flesh and smoking blood,
To the pain of the bleating mothers, which
Still yearn for their dead offspring? or the pangs
Of the sad ignorant victims underneath
Thy pious knife? Give way! this bloody record
Shall not stand in the sun, to shame creation!

ABEL. Brother, give back! thou shalt not touch my altar
With violence: if that thou wilt adopt it,
To try another sacrifice, 'tis thine

CAIN. Another sacrifice! Give way, or else
That sacrifice may be—

ABEL. What mean'st thou?

CAIN. Give—

Give way!—thy God loves blood!—then look to it —
Give way, ere he hath *more!*

ABEL. In *his* great name,

ACT III

I stand between thee and the shrine which hath
Had his acceptance.

CAIN. If thou lov'st thyself,
Stand back till I have strewed this turf along
Its native soil:—else

ABEL (*opposing him*). I love God far more
Than life.

CAIN (*striking him with a brand, on the temples, which he snatches
from the altar*). Then take thy life unto thy God,
Since he loves lives.

ABEL (*falls*). What hast thou done—my brother?

CAIN. Brother!

ABEL. Oh, God! receive thy servant! and
Forgive his slayer, for he knew not what
He did—Cain, give me—give me thy hand and tell
Poor Zillah—

CAIN (*after a moment's stupefaction*). My hand! 'tis all red,
and with—

What? [*A long pause.—Looking slowly round.*]

Where am I? alone! Where's Abel? where
Cain? Can it be that I am he? My brother,
Awake!—why liest thou so long on the green earth?
'Tis not the hour of slumber:—why so pale?
What hast thou!—thou wert full of life this morn!
Abel! I pray thee, mock me not! I smote
Too fiercely, but not fatally. Ah, why
Wouldst thou oppose me? This is mockery,
And only done to daunt me —'twas a blow—
And but a blow. Stir—stir—nay, only stir!
Why, so—that's well!—thou breathest! Breathe upon me!
Oh God! Oh God!

ABEL (*very faintly*). What's he who speaks of God?

CAIN

CAIN. Thy murderer.

ABEL. Then may God forgive him! Cain,
Comfort poor Zillah —she has but one brother
Now [ABEL *dies.*

CAIN. And I none!—Who makes me brotherless?
His eyes are open! then he is not dead!
Death is like sleep, and sleep shuts down our lids.
His lips, too, are apart, why then he breathes,
And yet I feel it not —His heart!—his heart!—
Let me see, doth it beat? methinks—No!—no!
This is a vision, else I am become
The native of another and worse world
The earth swims round me —what is this?—'tis wet,
[*Puts his hand to his brow, and then looks at it.*
And yet there are no dews! 'Tis blood—my blood—
My brother's and my own! and shed by me!
Then what have I further to do with life,
Since I have taken life from my own flesh?
But he can not be dead!—Is silence death?
No, he will wake, then let me watch by him
Life cannot be so slight, as to be quenched
Thus quickly!—he hath spoken to me since—
What shall I say to him?—My brother!—No.
He will not answer to that name, for brethren
Smite not each other. Yet—yet—speak to me
Oh! for a word more of that gentle voice,
That I may bear to hear my own again!

Enter ZILLAH

ZILLAH. I heard a heavy sound, what can it be?
'Tis Cain, and watching by my husband. What
Dost thou there, brother? Doth he sleep? Oh, Heaven!

ACT III

What means this paleness, and yon stream?—No, no!
 It is not blood; for who would shed his blood?
 Abel! what's this?—who hath done this? He moves not,
 He breathes not and his hands drop down from mine
 With stony lifelessness! Ah! cruel Cain!
 Why camest thou not in time to save him from
 This violence? Whatever hath assailed him,
 Thou wert the stronger, and shouldst have stepped in
 Between him and aggression! Father!—Eve!—
 Adah!—come hither! Death is in the world!

[*Exit ZILLAH, calling on her Parents, etc.*]

CAIN (*solus*). And who hath brought him there?—I
 —who abhor

The name of Death so deeply, that the thought
 Empoisoned all my life, before I knew
 His aspect—I have led him here, and given
 My brother to his cold and still embrace,
 As if he would not have asserted his
 Inexorable claim without my aid
 I am awake at last—a dreary dream
 Had maddened me;—but *he* shall ne'er awake!

Enter ADAM, EVE, ADAH, and ZILLAH.

ADAM. A voice of woe from Zillah brings me here—
 What do I see?—'Tis true!—My son!—my son!
 Woman, behold the serpent's work, and thine!

[*To EVE.*]

EVE. Oh! speak not of it now the serpent's fangs
 Are in my heart! My best belovéd, Abel!
 Jehovah! this is punishment beyond
 A mother's sin, to take *him* from me!

ADAM.

Who,

CAIN

Or what hath done this deed ?—speak, Cain, since thou
Wert present, was it some more hostile angel,
Who walks not with Jehovah ? or some wild
Brute of the forest ?

EVE. Ah ! a livid light
Breaks through, as from a thunder-cloud ! yon brand
Massy and bloody ! snatched from off the altar,
And black with smoke, and red with—

ADAM Speak, my son !
Speak, and assure us, wretched as we are,
That we are not more miserable still.

ADAH Speak, Cain ! and say it was not *thou* !

EVE. It was !
I see it now—he hangs his guilty head,
And covers his ferocious eye with hands
Incarnadine !

ADAH. Mother, thou dost him wrong—
Cain ! clear thee from this horrible accusal,
Which grief wrings from our parent.

EVE Hear, Jehovah !
May the eternal serpent's curse be on him !
For he was fitter for his seed than ours
May all his days be desolate ! May—

ADAH. Hold !
Curse him not, mother, for he is thy son—
Curse him not, mother, for he is my brother—
And my betrothed.

EVE. He hath left thee no brother—
Zillah no husband—me *no son* ! for thus
I curse him from my sight for evermore !
All bonds I break between us, as he broke
That of his nature, in yon—Oh Death ! Death !

ACT III

Why didst thou not take *me*, who first incurred thee ?
Why dost thou not so now ?

ADAM. Eve ! let not this,

Thy natural grief, lead to impiety !
A heavy doom was long forespoken to us ;
And now that it begins, let it be borne
In such sort as may show our God that we
Are faithful servants to his holy will.

EVE (*pointing to CAIN*). *His will!* the will of yon
Incarnate Spirit
Of Death, whom I have brought upon the earth
To strew it with the dead. May all the curses
Of life be on him ! and his agonies
Drive him forth o'er the wilderness, like us
From Eden, till his children do by him
As he did by his brother ! May the swords
And wings of fiery Cherubim pursue him
By day and night—snakes spring up in his path—
Earth's fruits be ashes in his mouth—the leaves
On which he lays his head to sleep be strewed
With scorpions ! May his dreams be of his victim !
His waking a continual dread of Death !
May the clear rivers turn to blood as he
Stoops down to stain them with his raging lip !
May every element shun or change to him !
May he live in the pangs which others die with !
And Death itself wax something worse than Death
To him who first acquainted him with man !
Hence, fratricide ! henceforth that word is *Cam*,
Through all the coming myriads of mankind,
Who shall abhor thee, though thou wert their sire !
May the grass wither from thy feet ! the woods

CAIN

Deny thee shelter! earth a home! the dust
A grave! the sun his light! and heaven her God!

[Exit EVE

ADAM Cain! get thee forth we dwell no more together.
Depart! and leave the dead to me—I am
Henceforth alone—we never must meet more.

ADAH Oh, part not with him thus, my father. do not
Add thy deep curse to Eve's upon his head!

ADAM. I curse him not his spirit be his curse.
Come, Zillah!

ZILLAH. I must watch my husband's corse

ADAM We will return again, when he is gone
Who hath provided for us this dread office.
Come, Zillah!

ZILLAH Yet one kiss on yon pale clay,
And those lips once so warm—my heart! my heart!

[Exeunt ADAM and ZILLAH weeping

ADAH Cain! thou hast heard, we must go forth. I am
ready,
So shall our children be. I will bear Enoch,
And you his sister. Ere the sun declines
Let us depart, nor walk the wilderness
Under the cloud of night —Nay, speak to me.
To me—*thine own*

CAIN Leave me!

ADAH. Why, all have left thee.

CAIN And wherefore lingerest thou? Dost thou not fear
To dwell with one who hath done this?

ADAH. I fear
Nothing except to leave thee, much as I
Shrink from the deed which leaves thee brotherless
I must not speak of this—it is between thee

ACT III

And the great God.

A Voice from within exclaims. Cain! Cain!

ADAH. Hear'st thou that voice?

The Voice within. Cain! Cain!

ADAH. It soundeth like an angel's tone.

Enter the ANGEL of the Lord.

ANGEL. Where is thy brother Abel?

CAIN. Am I then

My brother's keeper?

ANGEL. Cain! what hast thou done?

The voice of thy slain brother's blood cries out,
Even from the ground, unto the Lord!—Now art thou
Cursed from the earth, which opened late her mouth
To drink thy brother's blood from thy rash hand.
Henceforth, when thou shalt till the ground, it shall not
Yield thee her strength; a fugitive shalt thou
Be from this day, and vagabond on earth!

ADAH This punishment is more than he can bear
Behold thou drivest him from the face of earth,
And from the face of God shall he be hid.
A fugitive and vagabond on earth,
'Twill come to pass, that whoso findeth him
Shall slay him.

CAIN. Would they could! but who are they
Shall slay me? Where are these on the lone earth
As yet unpeopled?

ANGEL. Thou hast slain thy brother,
And who shall warrant thee against thy son?

ADAH Angel of Light! be merciful, nor say
That this poor aching breast now nourishes
A murderer in my boy, and of his father

CAIN

ANGEL. Then he would but be what his father is
Did not the milk of Eve give nutriment
To him thou now seest so besmeared with blood?
The fratricide might well engender parricides —
But it shall not be so—the Lord thy God
And mine commandeth me to set his seal
On Cain, so that he may go forth in safety.
Who slayeth Cain, a sevenfold vengeance shall
Be taken on his head Come hither!

CAIN.

What

Wouldst thou with me?

ANGEL.

To mark upon thy brow

Exemption from such deeds as thou hast done

CAIN No, let me die!

ANGEL.

It must not be.

[*The ANGEL sets the mark on CAIN'S brow*

CAIN

It burns

My brow, but nought to that which is within it!

Is there more? let me meet it as I may.

ANGEL. Stern hast thou been and stubborn from the womb,
As the ground thou must henceforth till, but he
Thou slew'st was gentle as the flocks he tended.

CAIN. After the fall too soon was I begotten;
Ere yet my mother's mind subsided from
The serpent, and my sire still mourned for Eden.
That which I am, I am; I did not seek
For life, nor did I make myself, but could I
With my own death redeem him from the dust—
And why not so? let him return to day,
And I lie ghastly! so shall be restored
By God the life to him he loved, and taken
From me a being I ne'er loved to bear.

ACT III

ANGEL. Who shall heal murder? what is done, is done;
Go forth! fulfil thy days! and be thy deeds
Unlike the last! [The ANGEL disappears.

ADAH He's gone, let us go forth,
I hear our little Enoch cry within
Our bower.

CAIN. Ah! little knows he what he weeps for!
And I who have shed blood cannot shed tears!
But the four rivers would not cleanse my soul.
Think'st thou my boy will bear to look on me?

ADAH. If I thought that he would not, I would——

CAIN (*interrupting her*). No,
No more of threats we have had too many of them.
Go to our children, I will follow thee.

ADAH I will not leave thee lonely with the dead—
Let us depart together

CAIN. Oh! thou dead
And everlasting witness! whose unsinking
Blood darkens earth and heaven! what thou *now* art
I know not! but if *thou* seest what *I* am,
I think thou wilt forgive him, whom his God
Can ne'er forgive, nor his own soul —Farewell!
I must not, dare not touch what I have made thee.
I, who sprung from the same womb with thee, drained
The same breast, clasped thee often to my own,
In fondness brotherly and boyish, I
Can never meet thee more, nor even dare
To do that for thee, which thou shouldst have done
For me—compose thy limbs into their grave—
The first grave yet dug for mortality.
But who hath dug that grave? Oh, earth! Oh, earth!
For all the fruits thou hast rendered to me, I

CAIN

Give thee back this —Now for the wilderness!

[*ADAH stoops down and kisses the body of ABEL.*

ADAH. A dreary, and an early doom, my brother,
Has been thy lot! Of all who mourn for thee,
I alone must not weep. My office is
Henceforth to dry up tears, and not to shed them,
But yet of all who mourn, none mourn like me,
Not only for thyself, but him who slew thee
Now, Cain! I will divide thy burden with thee.

CAIN Eastward from Eden will we take our way,
'Tis the most desolate, and suits my steps

ADAH Lead! thou shalt be my guide, and may our God
Be thine! Now let us carry forth our children.

CAIN. And *he* who lieth there was childless! I
Have dried the fountain of a gentle race,
Which might have graced his recent marriage couch,
And might have tempered this stern blood of mine,
Uniting with our children Abel's offspring?
O Abel!

ADAH. Peace be with him!

CAIN. But with *me*!—

[*Exeunt.*

1821.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT
BY
QUEVEDO REDIVIVUS
SUGGESTED BY THE COMPOSITION SO
ENTITLED BY THE AUTHOR OF
“WAT TYLER”

“A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.”

The Merchant of Venice, Act IV. Sc. 1.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

I

SAINTE PETER sat by the celestial gate ·
His keys were rusty, and the lock was dull,
So little trouble had been given of late,

Not that the place by any means was full,
But since the Gallic era "eighty-eight"

The Devils had ta'en a longer, stronger pull,
And "a pull all together," as they say
At sea—which drew most souls another way.

II

The Angels all were singing out of tune,
And hoarse with having little else to do,
Excepting to wind up the sun and moon,

Or curb a runaway young star or two,
Or wild colt of a comet, which too soon

Broke out of bounds o'er the ethereal blue,
Splitting some planet with its playful tail,
As boats are sometimes by a wanton whale.

III

The Guardian Seraphs had retired on high,
Finding their charges past all care below,
Terrestrial business filled nought in the sky

Save the Recording Angel's black bureau,
Who found, indeed, the facts to multiply

With such rapidity of vice and woe,
That he had stripped off both his wings in quills,
And yet was in arrear of human ills.

IV

His business so augmented of late years,

That he was forced, against his will, no doubt,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

(Just like those cherubs, earthly ministers,)

For some resource to turn himself about,
And claim the help of his celestial peers,

To aid him ere he should be quite worn out
By the increased demand for his remarks
Six Angels and twelve Saints were named his clerks.

V

This was a handsome board—at least for Heaven,
And yet they had even then enough to do,
So many Conquerors' cars were daily driven,
So many kingdoms fitted up anew,
Each day, too, slew its thousands six or seven,
Till at the crowning carnage, Waterloo,
They threw their pens down in divine disgust—
The page was so besmeared with blood and dust.

VI

This by the way, 'tis not mine to record
What Angels shrink from: even the very Devil
On this occasion his own work abhorred,
So surfeited with the infernal revel
Though he himself had sharpened every sword,
It almost quenched his innate thirst of evil.
(Here Satan's sole good work deserves insertion—
'Tis, that he has both Generals in reversion.)

VII

Let's skip a few short years of hollow peace,
Which peopled earth no better, Hell as wont,
And Heaven none—they form the tyrant's lease,
With nothing but new names subscribed upon't,
'Twill one day finish meantime they increase,
“With seven heads and ten horns,” and all in front,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Likê Saint John's foretold beast, but ours are born
Less formidable in the head than horn.

VIII

In the first year of Freedom's second dawn
Died George the Third, although no tyrant, one
Who shielded tyrants, till each sense withdrawn
Left him nor mental nor external sun.
A better farmer ne'er brushed dew from lawn,
A worse king never left a realm undone!
He died—but left his subjects still behind,
One half as mad—and t'other no less blind

IX

He died! his death made no great stir on earth
His burial made some pomp, there was profusion
Of velvet—gilding—brass—and no great dearth
Of aught but tears—save those shed by collusion
For these things may be bought at their true worth,
Of eîegy there was the due infusion—
Bought also; and the torches, cloaks and banners,
Heralds, and relics of old Gothic manners,

X

Formed a sepulchral melodrame Of all
The fools who flocked to swell or see the show,
Who cared about the corpse? The funeral
Madè the attraction, and the black the woe
There throbbèd not there a thought which pierced the pall;
And when the gorgeous coffin was laid low,
It seemèd the mockery of hell to fold
The rottenness of eighty years in gold

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XI

So mix his body with the dust! It might
Return to what it *must* far sooner, were
The natural compound left alone to fight
Its way back into earth, and fire, and air,
But the unnatural balsams merely blight
What Nature made him at his birth, as bare
As the mere million's base unmmmied clay—
Yet all his spices but prolong decay.

XII

He's dead—and upper earth with him has done,
He's buried; save the undertaker's bill,
Or lapidary scrawl, the world is gone
For him, unless he left a German will
But where's the proctor who will ask his son?
In whom his qualities are reigning still,
Except that household virtue, most uncommon,
Of constancy to a bad, ugly woman.

XIII

“God save the king!” It is a large economy
In God to save the like, but if he will
Be saving, all the better; for not one am I
Of those who think damnation better still
I hardly know too if not quite alone am I
In this small hope of bettering future ill
By circumscribing, with some slight restriction,
The eternity of Hell's hot jurisdiction.

XIV

I know this is unpopular, I know
'Tis blasphemous; I know one may be damned

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

For hoping no one else may e'er be so,

I know my catechism, I know we're crammed
With the best doctrines till we quite o'erflow,

I know that all save England's Church have shammed,
And that the other twice two hundred churches
And synagogues have made a *darned* bad purchase

XV

God help us all! God help me too! I am,

God knows, as helpless as the Devil can wish,
And not a whit more difficult to damp,

Than is to bring to land a late-hooked fish,
Or to the butcher to purvey the lamb,

Not that I'm fit for such a noble dish,
As one day will be that immortal fry
Of almost every body born to die.

XVI

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate,

And nodded o'er his keys when, lo! there came
A wondrous noise he had not heard of late—

A rushing sound of wind, and stream, and flame,
In short, a roar of things extremely great,

Which would have made aught save a Saint exclaim,
But he, with first a start and then a wink,
Said, "There's another star gone out, I think!"

XVII

But ere he could return to his repose,

A Cherub flapped his right wing o'er his eyes—
At which Saint Peter yawned, and rubbed his nose

"Saint porter," said the angel, "prithee rise!"
Waving a goodly wing, which glowed, as glows
An earthly peacock's tail, with heavenly eyes:

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

To which the saint replied, "Well, what's the matter?
Is Lucifer come back with all this clatter?"

XVIII

"No," quoth the Cherub: "George the Third is dead."

"And who *is* George the Third?" replied the apostle.
"*What George? What Third?*" "The King of England," said
The angel. "Well! he won't find kings to jostle
Him on his way, but does he wear his head?"

Because the last we saw here had a tustle,
And ne'er would have got into Heaven's good graces,
Had he not flung his head in all our faces.

XIX

"He was—if I remember—King of France;
That head of his, which could not keep a crown
On earth, yet ventured in my face to advance
A claim to those of martyrs—like my own:
If I had had my sword, as I had once
When I cut ears off, I had cut him down,
But having but my *keys*, and not my brand,
I only knocked his head from out his hand.

XX

"And then he set up such a headless howl,
That all the Saints came out and took him in,
And there he sits by Saint Paul, cheek by jowl,
That fellow Paul—the parvenu! The skin
Of Saint Bartholomew, which makes his cowl
In heaven, and upon earth redeemed his sin,
So as to make a martyr, never sped
Better than did this weak and wooden head.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XXI

“But had it come up here upon its shoulders,
There would have been a different tale to tell
The fellow-feeling in the Saints beholders
Seems to have acted on them like a spell,
And so this very foolish head Heaven solders
Back on its trunk it may be very well,
And seems the custom here to overthrow
Whatever has been wisely done below.”

XXII

The Angel answered, “Peter! do not pout
The King who comes has head and all entire,
And never knew much what it was about—
He did as doth the puppet—by its wire,
And will be judged like all the rest, no doubt.
My business and your own is not to inquire
Into such matters, but to mind our cue—
Which is to act as we are bid to do.”

XXIII

While thus they spake, the angelic caravan,
Arriving like a rush of mighty wind,
Cleaving the fields of space, as doth the swan
Some silver stream (say Ganges, Nile, or Inde,
Or Thames, or Tweed), and midst them an old man
With an old soul, and both extremely blind,
Halted before the gate, and, in his shroud,
Seated their fellow-traveller on a cloud

XXIV

But bringing up the rear of this bright host
A Spirit of a different aspect waved

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved,
His brow was like the deep when tempest-tossed,
Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face,
And *where* he gazed a gloom pervaded space.

XXV

As he drew near, he gazed upon the gate
Ne'er to be entered more by him or Sin,
With such a glance of supernatural hate,
As made Saint Peter wish himself within,
He potted with his keys at a great rate,
And sweated through his Apostolic skin
Of course his perspiration was but ichor,
Or some such other spiritual liquor.

XXVI

The very Cherubs huddled all together,
Like birds when soars the falcon; and they felt
A tingling to the tip of every feather,
And formed a circle like Orion's belt
Around their poor old charge, whose scarce knew whither
His guards had led him, though they gently dealt
With royal manes (for by many stories,
And true, we learn the Angels all are Tories).

XXVII

As things were in this posture, the gate flew
Asunder, and the flashing of its hinges
Flung over space an universal hue
Of many-coloured flame, until its tinges
Reached even our speck of earth, and made a new
Aurora borealis spread its fringes

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

O'er the North Pole, the same seen, when ice-bound,
By Captain Parry's crew, in "Melville's Sound"

XXVIII

And from the gate thrown open issued beaming
A beautiful and mighty Thing of Light,
Radiant with glory, like a banner streaming
Victorious from some world-o'erthrowing fight
My poor comparisons must needs be teeming
With earthly likenesses, for here the night
Of clay obscures our best conceptions saving
Johanna Southcote, or Bob Southey raving

XXIX

'Twas the Archangel Michael all men know
The make of Angels and Archangels, since
There's scarce a scribbler has not one to show,
From the fiends' leader to the Angels' Prince
There also are some altar-pieces, though
I really can't say that they much evince
One's inner notions of immortal spirits;
But let the connoisseurs explain *their* merits.

XXX

Michael flew forth in glory and in good,
A goodly work of him from whom all Glory
And Good arise; the portal past—he stood,
Before him the young Cherubs and Saints hoary—
(I say *young*, begging to be understood
By looks, not years; and should be very sorry
To state, they were not older than St. Peter,
But merely that they seemed a little sweeter)

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XXXI

The Cherubs and the Saints bowed down before
That arch-angelic Hierarch, the first
Of Essences angelical, who wore
The aspect of a god; but this ne'er nursed
Pride in his heavenly bosom, in whose core
No thought, save for his Maker's service, durst
Intrude—however glorified and high,
He knew him but the Viceroy of the sky.

XXXII

He and the sombre, silent Spirit met—
They knew each other both for good and ill,
Such was their power, that neither could forget
His former friend and future foe; but still
There was a high, immortal, proud regret
In either's eye, as if 'twere less their will
Than destiny to make the eternal years
Their date of war, and their "Champ Clos" the spheres.

XXXIII

But here they were in neutral space: we know
From Job, that Satan hath the power to pay
A heavenly visit thrice a year or so,
And that the "Sons of God," like those of clay,
Must keep him company, and we might show
From the same book, in how polite a way
The dialogue is held between the Powers
Of Good and Evil—but 'twould take up hours

XXXIV

And this is not a theologic tract,
To prove with Hebrew and with Arabic,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

If Job be allegory or a fact,
But a true narrative, and thus I pick
From out the whole but such and such an act
As sets aside the slightest thought of trick.
'Tis every tittle true, beyond suspicion,
And accurate as any other vision.

XXXV

The spirits were in neutral space, before
The gate of Heaven, like eastern thresholds is
The place where Death's grand cause is argued o'er,
And souls despatched to that world or to this,
And therefore Michael and the other wore
A civil aspect though they did not kiss,
Yet still between his Darkness and his Brightness
There passed a mutual glance of great politeness.

XXXVI

The Archangel bowed, not like a modern beau,
But with a graceful Oriental bend,
Pressing one radiant arm just where below
The heart in good men is supposed to tend,
He turned as to an equal, not too low,
But kindly; Satan met his ancient friend
With more hauteur, as might an old Castilian
Poor Noble meet a mushroom rich civilian

XXXVII

He merely bent his diabolic brow
An instant, and then raising it, he stood
In act to assert his right or wrong, and show
Cause why King George by no means could or should
Make out a case to be exempt from woe
Eternal, more than other kings, endued

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

With better sense and hearts, whom History mentions,
Who long have “paved Hell with their good intentions.”

XXXVIII

Michael began “What wouldst thou with this man,
Now dead, and brought before the Lord? What ill
Hath he wrought since his mortal race began,
That thou canst claim him? Speak! and do thy will,
If it be just. if in this earthly span
He hath been greatly failing to fulfil
His duties as a king and mortal, say,
And he is thine, if not—let him have way.”

XXXIX

“Michael!” replied the Prince of Air, “even here
Before the gate of Him thou servest, must
I claim my subject and will make appear
That as he was my worshipper in dust,
So shall he be in spirit, although dear
To thee and thine, because nor wine nor lust
Were of his weaknesses; yet on the throne
He reigned o’er millions to serve me alone.

XL

“Look to *our* earth, or rather *mine*; it was,
Once, more thy master’s but I triumph not
In this poor planet’s conquest; nor, alas!
Need he thou servest envy me my lot.
With all the myriads of bright worlds which pass
In worship round him, he may have forgot
Yon weak creation of such paltry things
I think few worth damnation save their kings,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XLI

“And these but as a kind of quit-rent, to
Assert my right as Lord and even had
I such an inclination, ’twere (as you
Well know) superfluous; they are grown so bad,
That Hell has nothing better left to do
Than leave them to themselves. so much more mad
And evil by their own internal curse,
Heaven cannot make them better, nor I worse.

XLII

“Look to the earth, I said, and say again:
When this old, blind, mad, helpless, weak, poor worm
Began in youth’s first bloom and flush to reign,
The world and he both wore a different form,
And much of earth and all the watery plain
Of Ocean called him king, through many a storm
His isles had floated on the abyss of Time,
For the rough virtues chose them for their clime

XLIII

“He came to his sceptre young, he leaves it, old:
Look to the state in which he found his realm,
And left it; and his annals too behold,
How to a minion first he gave the helm;
How grew upon his heart a thirst for gold,
The beggar’s vice, which can but overwhelm
The meanest hearts; and for the rest, but glance
Thine eye along America and France!

XLIV

“’Tis true, he was a tool from first to last;
(I have the workmen safe); but, as a tool

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

So let him be consumed. From out the past
Of ages, since mankind have known the rule
Of monarchs—from the bloody rolls amassed
Of Sin and Slaughter—from the Cæsars' school,
Take the worst pupil, and produce a reign
More drenched with gore, more cumbered with the slain.

XLV

“He ever warred with freedom and the free
Nations as men, home subjects, foreign foes,
So that they uttered the word ‘Liberty!’
Found George the Third their first opponent. Whose
History was ever stained as his will be
With national and individual woes?
I grant his household abstinence, I grant
His neutral virtues, which most monarchs want;

XLVI

“I know he was a constant consort, own
He was a decent sire, and middling lord
All this is much, and most upon a throne,
As temperance, if at Apicius' board,
Is more than at an anchorite's supper shown.
I grant him all the kindest can accord,
And this was well for him, but not for those
Millions who found him what Oppression chose.

XLVII

“The New World shook him off, the Old yet groans
Beneath what he and his prepared, if not
Completed he leaves heirs on many thrones
To all his vices, without what begot
Compassion for him—his tame virtues, drones
Who sleep, or despots who have now forgot

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

A lesson which shall be retaught them, wake
Upon the thrones of earth, but let them quake!

XLVIII

“Five millions of the primitive, who hold
The faith which makes ye great on earth, implored
A *part* of that vast *all* they held of old, —
Freedom to worship—not alone your Lord,
Michael, but you, and you, Saint Peter! Cold
Must be your souls, if you have not abhorred
The foe to Catholic participation
In all the licence of a Christian nation.

XLIX

“True! he allowed them to pray God, but as
A consequence of prayer, refused the law
Which would have placed them upon the same base
With those who did not hold the Saints in awe
But here Saint Peter started from his place
And cried, “You may the prisoner withdraw
Ere Heaven shall ope her portals to this Guelf,
While I am guard, may I be damned myself!

L

“Sooner will I with Cerberus exchange
My office (and *his* is no sinecure)
Than see this royal Bedlam-bigot range
The azure fields of Heaven, of that be sure!”
“Saint!” replied Satan, “you do well to avenge
The wrongs he made your satellites endure;
And if to this exchange you should be given,
I’ll try to coax *our* Cerberus up to Heaven!”

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

LI

Here Michael interposed: "Good Saint! and Devil!

Pray, not so fast, you both outrun discretion.

Saint Peter! you were wont to be more civil:

Satan! excuse this warmth of his expression,
And condescension to the vulgar's level.

Even Saints sometimes forget themselves in session.

Have you got more to say?"—"No."—"If you please,
I'll trouble you to call your witnesses."

LII

Then Satan turned and waved his swarthy hand,

Which stirred with its electric qualities

Clouds farther off than we can understand,

Although we find him sometimes in our skies,
Infernal thunder shook both sea and land

In all the planets—and Hell's batteries
Let off the artillery, which Milton mentions
As one of Satan's most sublime inventions.

LIII

This was a signal unto such damned souls

As have the privilege of their damnation

Extended far beyond the mere controls

Of worlds past, present, or to come; no station
Is theirs particularly in the rolls

Of Hell assigned; but where their inclination
Or business carries them in search of game,

They may range freely—being damned the same

LIV

They are proud of this—as very well they may,

It being a sort of knighthood, or gilt key

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Stuck in their loins, or like to an "entrée"
Up the back stairs, or such free-masonry.
I borrow my comparisons from clay,
Being clay myself. Let not those spirits be
Offended with such base low likenesses,
We know their posts are nobler far than these.

LV

When the great signal ran from Heaven to Hell—
About ten million times the distance reckoned
From our sun to its earth, as we can tell
How much time it takes up, even to a second,
For every ray that travels to dispel
The fogs of London, through which, dimly beaconed,
The weathercocks are gilt some thrice a year,
If that the *summer* is not too severe,—

LVII

I say that I can tell—'twas half a minute,
I know the solar beams take up more time
Ere, packed up for their journey, they begin it,
But then their Telegraph is less sublime,
And if they ran a race, they would not win it
'Gainst Satan's couriers bound for their own clime.
The sun takes up some years for every ray
To reach its goal—the Devil not half a day.

LVII

Upon the verge of space, about the size
Of half-a-crown, a little speck appeared
(I've seen a something like it in the skies
In the Ægean, ere a squall); it neared,
And, growing bigger, took another guise,
Like an aerial ship it tacked, and steered,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Or *was* steered (I am doubtful of the grammar
Of the last phrase, which makes the stanza stammer;—

LVIII

But take your choice) and then it grew a cloud;
And so it was—a cloud of witnesses.
But such a cloud! No land ere saw a crowd
Of locusts numerous as the heavens saw these;
They shadowed with their myriads Space, their loud
And varied cries were like those of wild geese
(If nations may be likened to a goose),
And realised the phrase of “Hell broke loose.”

LIX

Here crashed a sturdy oath of stout John Bull,
Who damned away his eyes as heretofore.
There Paddy brogued “By Jasus!”—“What’s your wull?”
The temperate Scot exclaimed: the French ghost swore
In certain terms I shan’t translate in full,
As the first coachman will, and ’midst the war
The voice of Jonathan was heard to express,
“Our President is going to war, I guess.”

LX

Besides there were the Spaniard, Dutch, and Dane,
In short, an universal shoal of shades
From Otahite’s isle to Salisbury Plain,
Of all climes and professions, years and trades,
Ready to swear against the good king’s reign,
Bitter as clubs in cards are against spades
All summoned by this grand “subpoena,” to
Try if kings mayn’t be damned like me or you.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

LXI

When Michael saw this host, he first grew pale,
As Angels can, next, like Italian twilight,
He turned all colours—as a peacock's tail,
Or sunset streaming through a Gothic skylight
In some old abbey, or a trout not stale,
Or distant lightning on the horizon *by* night,
Or a fresh rainbow, or a grand review
Of thirty regiments in red, green, and blue

LXII

Then he addressed himself to Satan: "Why—
My good old friend, for such I deem you, though
Our different parties make us fight so shy,
I ne'er mistake you for a *personal* foe,
Our difference is *political*, and I
Trust that, whatever may occur below,
You know my great respect for you and this
Makes me regret whate'er you do amiss—

LXIII

"Why, my dear Lucifer, would you abuse
My call for witnesses? I did not mean
That you should half of Earth and Hell produce,
'Tis even superfluous, since two honest, clean,
True testimonies are enough: we lose
Our Time, nay, our Eternity, between
The accusation and defence if we
Hear both, 'twill stretch our immortality "

LXIV

Satan replied, "To me the matter is
Indifferent, in a personal point of view."

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

I can have fifty better souls than this

With far less trouble than we have gone through
Already, and I merely argued his

Late Majesty of Britain's case with you
Upon a point of form you may dispose
Of him, I've kings enough below, God knows!"

LXV

Thus spoke the Demon (late called "multifaced"

By multo-scribbling Southey). "Then we'll call
One or two persons of the myriads placed

Around our cōngress, and dispense with all
The rest," quoth Michael: "Who may be so graced
As to speak first? there's choice enough—who shall
It be?" Then Satan answered, "There are many;
But you may choose Jack Wilkes as well as any."

LXVI

A merry, cock-eyed, curious-looking Sprite
Upon the instant started from the throng,

Dressed in a fashion now forgotten quite;
For all the fashions of the flesh stick long

By people in the next world, where unite
All the costumes since Adam's, right or wrong,
From Eve's fig-leaf down to the petticoat,
Almost as scanty, of days less remote.

LXVII

The Spirit looked around upon the crowds

Assembled, and exclaimed, "My friends of Il
The spheres, we shall catch cold amongst these clouds;

So let's to business: why this general call?
If those are freeholders I see in shrouds,

And 'tis for an election that they bawl,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Behold a candidate with unturned coat !
Saint Peter, may I count upon your vote ? ”

LXVIII

“ Sir,” replied Michael, “ you mistake ; these things
Are of a former life, and what we do
Above is more august, to judge of kings
Is the tribunal met so now you know.”
“ Then I presume those gentlemen with wings,”
Said Wilkes, “ are Cherubs, and that soul below
Looks much like George the Third, but to my mind
A good deal older—Bless me ! is he blind ? ”

LXIX

“ He is what you behold him, and his doom
Depends upon his deeds,” the Angel said,
“ If you have aught to arraign in him, the tomb
Gives licence to the humblest beggar’s head
To lift itself against the loftiest ” — “ Some,”
Said Wilkes, “ don’t wait to see them laid in lead,
For such a liberty—and I, for one,
Have told them what I thought beneath the sun ”

LXX

“ *Above* the sun repeat, then, what thou hast
To urge against him,” said the Archangel. “ Why,”
Replied the Spirit, “ since old scores are past,
Must I turn evidence ? In faith, not I
Besides, I beat him hollow at the last,
With all his Lords and Commons in the sky
I don’t like ripping up old stores, since
His conduct was but natural in a prince.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

LXXI

“Foolish, no doubt, and wicked, to oppress
A poor unlucky devil without a shilling;
But then I blame the man himself much less
Than Bute and Grafton, and shall be unwilling
To see him punished here for their excess,
Since they were both damned long ago, and still in
Their place below. for me, I have forgiven,
And vote his *habeas corpus* into Heaven.”

LXXII

“Wilkes,” said the Devil, “I understand all this;
You turned to half a courtier ere you died,
And seem to think it would not be amiss
To grow a whole one on the other side
Of Charon’s ferry, you forget that *his*
Reign is concluded, whatsoe’er betide,
He won’t be sovereign more: you’ve lost your labour,
For at the best he will but be your neighbour.

LXXIII

“However, I knew what to think of it,
When I beheld you in your jesting way,
Flitting and whispering round about the spit
Where Belial, upon duty for the day,
With Fox’s lard was basting William Pitt,
His pupil, I knew what to think, I say:
That fellow even in Hell breeds further ills,
I’ll have him *gagged*—’twas one of his own bills.

LXXIV

“Call Junius!” From the crowd a Shadow stalked,
And at the name there was a general squeeze,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

So that the very ghosts no longer walked
In comfort, at their own aerial ease,
But were all rammed, and jammed (but to be balked,
As we shall see), and jostled hands and knees,
Like wind compressed and pent within a bladder,
Or like a human colic, which is sadder.

LXXV

The shadow came—a tall, thin, grey-haired figure,
That looked as it had been a shade on earth,
Quick in its motions, with an air of vigour,
But nought to mark its breeding or its birth,
Now it waxed little, then again grew bigger,
With now an air of gloom, or savage mirth;
But as you gazed upon its features, they
Changed every instant—to *what*, none could say

LXXVI

The more intently the ghosts gazed, the less
Could they distinguish whose the features were;
The Devil himself seemed puzzled even to guess;
They varied like a dream—now here, now there;
And several people swore from out the press,
They knew him perfectly, and one could swear
He was his father, upon which another
Was sure he was his mother's cousin's brother.

LXXVII

Another, that he was a duke, or knight,
An orator, a lawyer, or a priest,
A nabob, a man-midwife; but the wight
Mysterious changed his countenance at least
As oft as they their minds; though in full sight
He stood, the puzzle only was increased;

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

The man was a phantasmagoria in
Himself—he was so volatile and thin !

LXXVIII

The moment that you had pronounced him *one*,
Presto ! his face changed, and he was another ;
And when that change was hardly well put on,
It varied, till I don't think his own mother
(If that he had a mother) would her son
Have known, he shifted so from one to t'other,
Till guessing from a pleasure grew a task,
At this epistolary "Iron Mask."

LXXIX

For sometimes he like Cerberus would seem—
"Three gentlemen at once" (as sagely says
Good Mrs Malaprop), then you might deem
That he was not even *one*, now many rays
Were flashing round him, and now a thick steam
Hid him from sight—like fogs on London days:
Now Burke, now Tooke, he grew to people's fancies,
And certes often like Sir Philip Francis

LXXX

I've an hypothesis—'tis quite my own,
I never let it out till now, for fear
Of doing people harm about the throne,
And injuring some minister or peer,
On whom the stigma might perhaps be blown,
It is—my gentle public, lend thine ear!
'Tis, that what Junius we are wont to call,
Was *really—truly*—nobody at all.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

LXXXI

I don't see wherefore letters should not be
Written without hands, since we daily view
Them written without heads, and books, we see,
Are filled as well without the latter too
And really till we fix on somebody
For certain sure to claim them as his due,
Their author, like the Niger's mouth, will bother
The world to say if *there* be mouth or author.

LXXXII

"And who and what art thou?" the Archangel said.
"For *that* you may consult my title-page,"
Replied this mighty Shadow of a Shade:
"If I have kept my secret half an age,
I scarce shall tell it now" — "Canst thou upbraid,"
Continued Michael, "George Rex, or allege
Aught further?" Junius answered, "You had better
First ask him for *his* answer to my letter

LXXXIII

"My charges upon record will outlast
The brass of both his epitaph and tomb."
"Repent'st thou not," said Michael, "of some past
Exaggeration? something which may doom
Thyself if false, as him if true? Thou wast
Too bitter — is it not so? — in thy gloom
Of passion?" — "Passion!" cried the Phantom dim,
"I loved my country, and I hated him.

LXXXIV

"What I have written, I have written let
The rest be on his head or mine!" So spoke

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Old "*Nominis Umbra*", and while speaking yet,
Away he melted in celestial smoke.
Then Satan said to Michael, "Don't forget
To call George Washington, and John Horne Tooke,
And Franklin;"—but at this time there was heard
A cry for room, though not a phantom stirred.

LXXXV

At length with jostling, elbowing, and the aid
Of Cherubim appointed to that post,
The devil Asmodeus to the circle made
His way, and looked as if his journey cost
Some trouble. When his burden down he laid,
"What's this?" cried Michael; "why, 'tis not a ghost?"
"I know it," quoth the Incubus, "but he
Shall be one, if you leave the affair to me.

LXXXVI

"Confound the Renegado! I have sprained
My left wing, he's so heavy, one would think
Some of his works about his neck were chained.
But to the point, while hovering o'er the brink
Of Skiddaw (where as usual it still rained),
I saw a taper, far below me, wink,
And stooping, caught this fellow at a libel—
No less on History than the Holy Bible.

LXXXVI

"The former is the Devil's scripture, and
The latter yours, good Michael: so the affair
Belongs to all of us, you understand.
I snatched him up just as you see him there,
And brought him off for sentence out of hand—
I've scarcely been ten minutes in the air—

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

At least a quarter it can hardly be ·
I dare say that his wife is still at tea."

LXXXVIII

Here Satan said, "I know this man of old,
And have expected him for some time here:
A sillier fellow you will scarce behold,
Or more conceited in his petty sphere
But surely it was not worth while to fold
Such trash below your wing, Asmodeus dear!
We had the poor wretch safe (without being bored
With carriage) coming of his own accord.

LXXXIX

"But since he's here, let's see what he has done."
"Done!" cried Asmodeus, "he anticipates
The very business you are now upon,
And scribbles as if head clerk to the Fates.
Who knows to what his ribaldry may run,
When such an ass as this, like Balaam's, prates?
"Let's hear," quoth Michael, "what he has to say
You know we're bound to that in every way."

XC

Now the Bard, glad to get an audience, which
By no means often was his case below,
Began to cough, and hawk, and hem, and pitch
His voice into that awful note of woe
To all unhappy hearers within reach
Of poets when the tide of rhyme's in flow,
But stuck fast with his first hexâmeter,
Not one of all whose gouty feet would stir.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XC I

But ere the spavined dactyls could be spurred
Into recitative, in great dismay
Both Cherubim and Seraphim were heard
To murmur loudly through their long array,
And Michael rose ere he could get a word
Of all his foundered verses under way,
And cried, "For God's sake stop, my friend! 'twere best—
'*Non De, non homines*'—you know the rest."

XC II

A general bustle spread throughout the throng,
Which seemed to hold all verse in detestation;
The Angels had of course enough of song
When upon service, and the generation
Of ghosts had heard too much in life, not long
Before, to profit by a new occasion
The Monarch, mute till then, exclaimed, "What! what!
Pye come again? No more—no more of that!"

XC III

The tumult grew; an universal cough
Convulsed the skies, as during a debate,
When Castlereagh has been up long enough
(Before he was first minister of state,
I mean—the *slaves hear now*); some cried "Off, off!"
As at a farce, till, grown quite desperate,
The Bard Saint Peter prayed to interpose
(Himself an author) only for his prose.

XC IV

The varlet was not an ill-favoured knave,
A good deal like a vulture in the face,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

With a hook nose and a hawk's eye, which gave
A smart and sharper-looking sort of grace
To his whole aspect, which, though rather grave,
Was by no means so ugly as his case,
But that, indeed, was hopeless as can be,
Quite a poetic felony "*de se*."

XCV

Then Michael blew his trump, and stilled the noise
With one still greater, as is yet the mode
On earth besides; except some grumbling voice,
Which now and then will make a slight inroad
Upon decorous silence, few will twice
Lift up their lungs when fairly overcrowded,
And now the Bard could plead his own bad cause,
With all the attitudes of self-applause.

XCVI

He said—(I only give the heads)—he said,
He meant no harm in scribbling; 'twas his way
Upon all topics; 'twas, besides, his bread,
Of which he buttered both sides; 'twould delay
Too long the assembly (he was pleased to dread),
And take up rather more time than a day,
To name his works—he would but cite a few—
"Wat Tyler"—"Rhymes on Blenheim"—"Waterloo."

XCVII

He had written praises of a regicide;
He had written praises of all kings whatever;
He had written for republics far and wide,
And then against them bitterer than ever;
For pantisocracy he once had cried
Aloud, a scheme less moral than 'twas clever;

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Then grew a hearty anti-jacobin—
Had turned his coat—and would have turned his skin.

XCVIII

He had sung against all battles, and again
In their high praise and glory; he had called
Reviewing "the ungentle craft," and then
Became as base a critic as e'er crawled—
Fed, paid, and pampered by the very men
By whom his muse and morals had been mauled:
He had written much blank verse, and blanker prose,
And more of both than anybody knows.

XCIX

He had written Wesley's life.—here turning round
To Satan, "Sir, I'm ready to write yours,
In two octavo volumes, nicely bound,
With notes and preface, all that most allures
The pious purchaser, and there's no ground
For fear, for I can choose my own reviewers:
So let me have the proper documents,
That I may add you to my other saints."

C

Satan bowed, and was silent. "Well, if you
With amiable modesty, decline
My offer, what says Michael? There are few
Whose memoirs could be rendered more divine.
Mine is a pen of all work; not so new
As it was once, but I would make you shine
Like your own trumpet. By the way, my own
Has more of brass in it, and is as well blown.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

CI

“But talking about trumpets, here’s my ‘Vision’!

Now you shall judge, all people, yes, you shall
Judge with my judgment! and by my decision

Be guided who shall enter heaven or fall!

I settle all these things by intuition,

Times present, past, to come, Heaven, Hell, and all.

Like King Alfonso, when I thus see double,

I save the Deity some worlds of trouble!”

CII

He ceased, and drew forth an MS., and no

Persuasion on the part of devils, saints,

Or angels, now could stop the torrent; so

He read the first three lines of the contents,

But at the fourth, the whole spiritual show

Had vanished, with variety of scents,

Ambrosial and sulphureous, as they sprang,

Like lightning, off from his “melodious twang”

CIII

Those grand heroics acted as a spell;

The angels stopped their ears and plied their pinions;

The devils ran howling, deafened, down to Hell;

The ghosts fled, gibbering, for their own dominions—

(For ’tis not yet decided where they dwell,

And I leave every man to his opinions),

Michael took refuge in his trump—but, lo!

His teeth were set on edge, he could not blow!

CIV

Saint Peter, who has hitherto been known

For an impetuous saint, upraised his keys.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

And at the fifth line knocked the poet down,

Who fell like Phaeton, but more at ease,
Into his lake, for there he did not drown;

A different web being by the Destinies
Woven for the Laureate's final wreath, whene'er
Reform shall happen either here or there.

CV

He first sank to the bottom—like his works,

But soon rose to the surface—like himself,
For all corrupted things are buoyed like corks,

By their own rottenness, light as an elf,
Or wisp that flits o'er a morass: he lurks,

It may be, still, like dull books on a shelf,
In his own den, to scrawl some "Life" or "Vision,"
As Welborn says—"the Devil turned precisian."

CVI

As for the rest, to come to the conclusion

Of this true dream, the telescope is gone
Which kept my optics free from all delusion,

And showed me what I in my turn have shown;
All I saw further, in the last confusion,

Was, that King George slipped into Heaven for one;
And when the tumult dwindled to a calm,
I left him practising the hundredth psalm.

1821—22.

STANZAS WRITTEN ON THE ROAD BETWEEN
FLORENCE AND PISA

O H, talk not to me of a name great in story—
The days of our Youth are the days of our glory,
And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-twenty
Are worth all your laurels, though ever so plenty

What are garlands and crowns to the brow that is wrinkled?
'Tis but as a dead flower with May-dew besprinkled:
Then away with all such from the head that is hoary,
What care I for the wreaths that can *only* give glory?

Oh FAME!—if I e'er took delight in thy praises,
'Twas less for the sake of thy high-sounding phrases,
Than to see the bright eyes of the dear One discover,
She thought that I was not unworthy to love her.

There chiefly I sought thee, *there* only I found thee,
Her Glance was the best of the rays that surround thee,
When it sparkled o'er aught that was bright in my story,
I knew it was Love, and I felt it was Glory

November 6, 1821.

ADDRESS TO ACHILLES FROM
THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED"

BEAUTIFUL shadow
Of Theits's boy!
Who sleeps in the meadow
Whose grass grows o'er Troy:
From the red earth, like Adam,
Thy likeness I shape,
As the Being who made him,
Whose actions I ape.
Thou Clay, be all glowing,
Till the rose in his cheek
Be as fair as, when blowing,
It wears its first streak!
Ye Violets, I scatter,
Now turn into eyes!
And thou, sunshiny Water,
Of blood take the guise!
Let these hyacinth boughs
Be his long flowing hair
And wave o'er his brows,
As thou wavest in air!
Let his heart be this marble
I tear from the rock!
But his voice as the warble
Of birds on yon oak!
Let his flesh be the purest
Of mould, in which grew
The lily-root surest,
And drank the best dew!
Let his limbs be the lightest
Which clay can compound,

ADDRESS TO ACHILLES

And his aspect the brightest
On earth to be found !
Elements, near me,
Be mingled and stirred,
Know me, and hear me,
And leap to my word !
Sunbeams, awaken
This earth's animation !
'Tis done ! He hath taken
His stand in creation !

1822—24.

CHORUS FROM
"THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED"

I

THE wars are over,
The spring is come,
The bride and her lover
Have sought their home:
They are happy, we rejoice;
Let their hearts have an echo in every voice!

II

The spring is come, the violet's gone,
The first-born child of the early sun:
With us she is but a winter's flower,
The snow on the hills cannot blast her bower,
And she lifts up her dewy eye of blue
To the youngest sky of the self-same hue.

III

And when the spring comes with her host
Of flowers, that flower beloved the most
Shrinks from the crowd that may confuse
Her heavenly odour and virgin hues.

IV

Pluck the others, but still remember
Their herald out of dim December—
The morning star of all the flowers,
The pledge of daylight's lengthened hours;
Nor, midst the roses, e'er forget
The virgin—virgin violet.

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY
THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

1

'**T**IS time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move.
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

2

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone,
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

3

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle,
No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile.

4

The hope, the fear, the zealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

5

But 'tis not *thus*—and 'tis not *here*—
Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor *now*
Where Glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

COMPLETE MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

6

The Sword, the Banner, and the Field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free.

7

Awake! (not Greece—she *is* awake!)
Awake, my spirit! Think through *whom*
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

8

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood!—unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of Beauty be.

9

If thou regret'st thy youth, *why live?*
The land of honourable death
Is here:—up to the Field, and give
Away thy breath!

10

Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.

Missolo ghi, Jan. 22, 1824.

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